



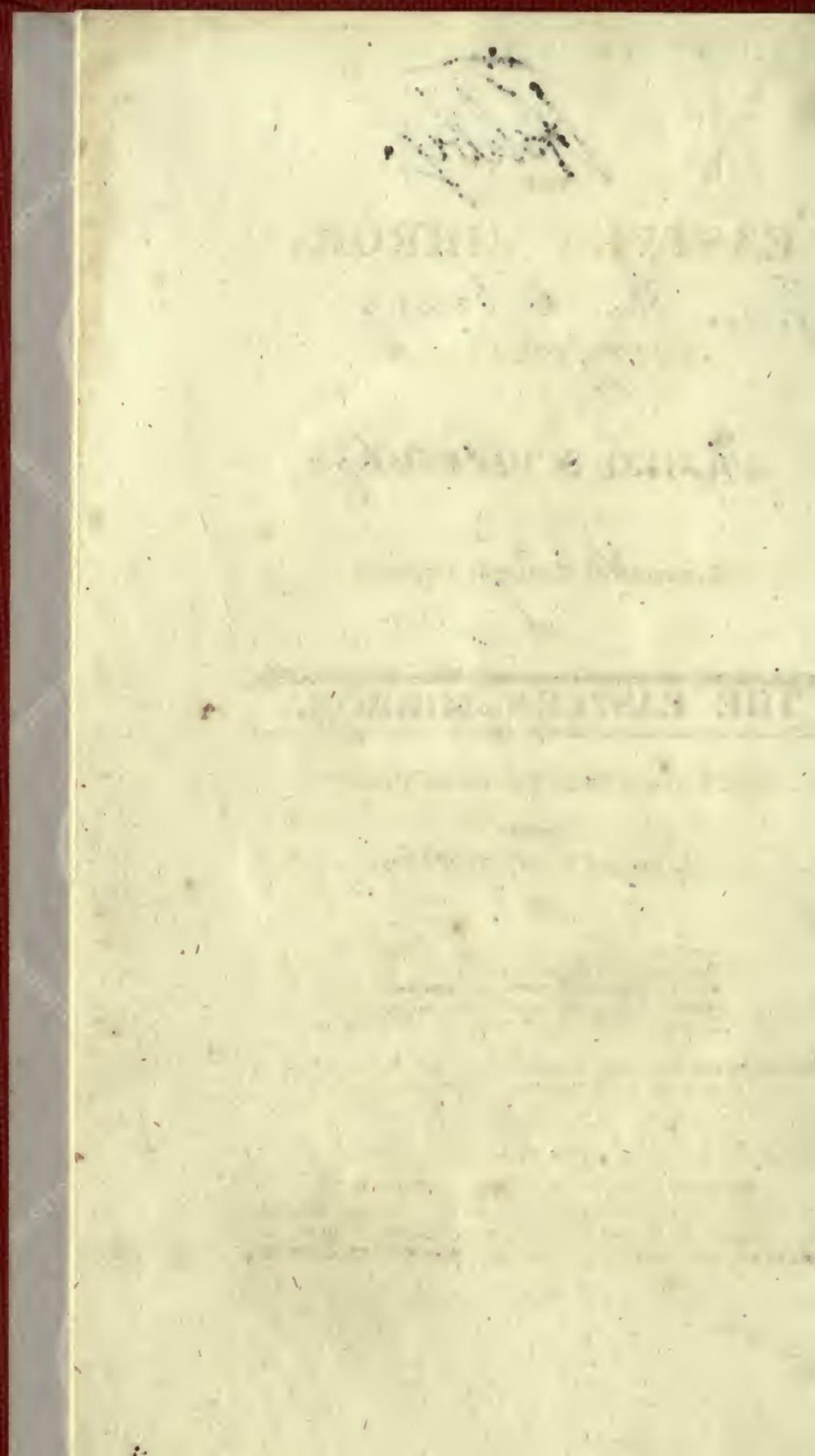
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1887

THE EASTERN MIRROR.

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THE
EASTERN MIRROR;
AN
ILLUSTRATION
OF THE
SACRED SCRIPTURES;
IN WHICH THE
Customs of Oriental Nations
ARE
CLEARLY DEVELOPED BY THE WRITINGS
OF THE
MOST CELEBRATED TRAVELLERS.

By the REV. W. FOWLER.

Read and revere the sacred page ; a page
Where triumphs immortality ; a page
Which not the whole creation could produce,
Which not the conflagration shall destroy ;
In nature's ruins not one letter lost. YOUNG.

Understandest thou what thou readest ? And he said, How can I, except
some one should guide me ?—Acts viii. 30, 31.

EXETER :

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INTRODUCTION.

THE Bible is justly and universally allowed, by all the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, to be a book of the first importance. The Bible contains all those subjects in which our best interests are most deeply concerned; and points out to us the only path which can conduct us to happiness in this world, or lead us finally to Heaven. From a deep sense of its vast and general utility, pious characters in every age have made it their study to elucidate and diffuse the scriptures, while myriads have found them to be a *lamp unto their feet, and a light unto their path.*

As the scriptures were originally written in the East, we meet with frequent allusions to customs and scenes, not known among us in the Western parts of the world. To satisfy the enquiring mind upon these important subjects, the writings of many pious and

judicious travellers have been collected with care, and examined with scrutiny. The result of this investigation has added new laurels to the Christian system ; whose transcendant beauties will always brighten, in proportion to the information of its reader.

The valuable works of Mess. Harmer, Calmet, and Burder, upon the subject of Eastern customs, are too expensive to be acquired by some, and too voluminous to be read by others. Their united labours to the mass of society are a sealed fountain ; they hear of its excellencies, but cannot drink of its streams.

To remedy this evil, the compiler of the present work has been encouraged to give the subject the most serious consideration, to collect the most important particulars, and compress them into a single volume. In the execution of this task, he has endeavoured to expunge all extraneous matter, to gather the scattered rays of light into one focus, and to arrange the various subjects under their proper heads.

It has been found necessary to make a thousand alterations in the form of the subjects introduced into this volume ; but the writer's ideas have been faithfully traced, where his language is not strictly

followed. In some places where the reports of travellers are of the discordant cast, instead of troubling the reader with all their perplexing disputes, the subject has been impartially examined, and only that part advanced which appears to merit the greatest confidence.

The study of Eastern customs is doubtless of incalculable utility. Dr. Clarke says, "without such a work, ninety-nine out of every hundred of those who profess to teach the church of God, must remain, in many important points, ignorant of the contents of that book, which alone contains the science of salvation."

That the study of the present volume may assist in perfecting the Christian character, and make the Minister *a workman that needeth not to be ashamed*, is the earnest prayer of

The reader's humble Servant,

W. FOWLER.

and of the people who have been here before us. We are
indeed bound by the past, but we must not let it bind us.
We must go forward, and not backward, and we must
not let our past be a curse, but a blessing, a spur, and
a guide, and a source of strength and power.

Let us not follow the ways of our fathers, but let us do
what we think is right, and let us not be afraid to do it,
for we are the descendants of a great and noble race,
and we are bound to them by blood and by name, and
we must not let them down, but we must stand up
and be counted, and we must not be afraid to do what is right.

Let us not be afraid to speak our minds, and to act
according to our convictions, and let us not be afraid to
stand up for what is right, and let us not be afraid to
die for what we believe in.

Bringing back our sons

THE
EASTERN MIRROR;
AN
ILLUSTRATION
OF THE
SACRED SCRIPTURES.

GENESIS.

NO. I.—ANCIENT OFFERINGS.

iv. 3. *Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord.*

To offer to the source of all our comforts the first fruits of the herbage, and of the different kinds of grain and fruits, was the practice of mankind from the beginning. The earliest instance of these oblations on record is that of Cain, the eldest son of the first great husbandman, who doubtless, following paternal precedent, *brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord.* Thus the Jews consecrated the first fruits of their oil, their wine, and their wheat; and, by divine institution, whatsoever opened the womb, whether of man or of beast, was sacred to the Lord. This same custom prevailed among the Gentiles, who, when they had gathered in their fruits,

* Numb. xviii. 12.

offered solemn sacrifices, with thanks to God for his blessings. According to Porphyry, an ancient festival was annually celebrated at Athens, to the honour of the sun, in which the simplicity of the offerings resembled the practice of the first ages. Consecrated grass was carried about, in which the kernels of olives were wrapped up together with figs, all kinds of pulse, oaken leaves, with acorns, and cakes composed of the meal of wheat and barley, heaped up in a pyramidal form, allusive to the beams which ripened the grain.
Burder.—The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.—Psalm li. 17.

NO. 2.—TRANSLATION OF ENOCH.

v. 24. *God took him.*

Burder says the following singular tradition may possibly have some reference to the translation of Enoch: "The Kalmucks, among other idols, worship in a peculiar manner one, which they call Xacamuni. They say, that four thousand years ago, he was only a sovereign prince in India; but, on account of his unparalleled sanctity, God had taken him up to heaven alive."—*Von Strahlenberg.*

NO. 3.—ABYSSINIAN CRUELTY.

ix. 4. *But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.*

Mr. Bruce has given us an account of the manner of eating blood in Abyssinia. He says, that at a small distance from its ancient capital he overtook three persons driving a cow: they had lances and shields in their hands, and appeared to be soldiers. He saw these men trip up the cow and give it a rude fall

upon the ground: one of them sat across her neck, holding down her head by the horns; another twisted an halter about her fore-feet, while the third, who had a knife in his hand, getting across the poor creature, gave it a deep wound in the upper part of the buttock, and cut out two pieces of flesh, thicker and longer than our ordinary beef steaks, which they spread upon the outside of one of their shields. They then proceeded to care for the beast, and turning back the skin over the wound, they fastened it to the correspondent part by two or more small skewers or pins, and covered it with a cataplasim of clay: they then forced the animal to rise, and drove it on before them to furnish them with a fuller meal when they should meet their companions in the evening.

It appears that the Israelites, in the days of Saul, had a strong propensity to this crime. After they had conquered the Philistines they flew upon the spoil, and took sheep, and oxen, and calves, and did eat them with the blood: that is, they cut off the flesh of the beasts whilst they were yet alive, and ate it raw.—1 Sam. xiv. 33. To prevent this, Saul caused a great stone to be rolled to him, and ordered that the cattle should all be killed upon that stone, by cutting their throats. Thus the blood was poured upon the ground like water, and the animal known to be dead before its flesh was eaten.—*Burder.*

NO. 4.—OPULENCE OF EASTERN SHEPHERDS.

xiii. 2. *And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.*

The cattle of the eastern shepherds comprised their greatest treasure, particularly their flocks of

sheep and goats; for they were not so much concerned about camels, horses, asses, and oxen, though they had them in great numbers, for the carriage of their portable cities, as they call their tents, which are in common black, and made of goats' hair.

The opulence of those shepherds flowed from various sources; such as the sale of their cattle, butter, milk, and the wool of their flocks. Their expenditure was small; for they drew their support from their own cultivated lands and fruitful flocks: hence they were continually making acquisitions of money *current with the merchant*.—Gen. xxiii. 16.

The splendor of their equipage has struck the traveller with astonishment. Sir J. Chardin says, he has seen in Persia and Turkey, where the country is full of those Turcomans, their chiefs travelling with a great train, very well clothed and mounted. He saw one between Parthia and Hyrcania, whose train surprised and alarmed him. He had more than ten led horses, with all their harness of solid gold and silver. He was accompanied by many shepherds on horseback, and well armed. Their rustic mien and tanned complexion caused him at first to take them for robbers; but he was soon undeceived. They treated him with civility, and answered all the questions his curiosity prompted him to offer, concerning their manner and way of life. The whole country, for ten leagues, was full of flocks that belonged to them. Chardin adds, “about an hour after I saw his wives and principal attendants passing along in a row; there were four in cajavehs: these are great square cunes carried two upon a camel, which were not close covered. The rest were on camels, on asses, and on

horseback, most of them with their faces unveiled. I saw some very beautiful women among them."—*Harmer.*

NO. 5.—INDULGENCE TO SLAVES.

xv. 3. *And Abram said, behold to me thou hast given no seed ; and lo one born in my house is mine heir.*

When the easterns have no male issue, they frequently marry their daughters to their slaves ; as in 1 Chron. ii. 34, 35. *Now Sheshan had no sons, but daughters ; and Sheshan had a servant, an Egyptian, whose name was Jarha ; and Sheshan gave his daughter to Jarha his servant to wife.* The rich people of Barbary, when they have no children, are known to purchase young slaves, to educate them in their own faith, and sometimes to adopt them for their own children. European relations would doubtless charge such conduct with cruelty and injustice ; but the people of the East entertained different ideas. *One born in my house is mine heir.* Probably Abraham alluded to one of his home-born slaves, though he had brother's children, if not a brother, in Mesopotamia.—*Gen. xxii. 20, 24.*

Maillet speaks of the rising of these slaves at times to the highest posts of state. He says, there was an eunuch at Cairo, when he resided there, who had made three Beys or Princes of that country from among his slaves ; and he speaks of another Bey who had at one time five or six of his slaves Beys like himself.

Thevenot informs us, that the greatest men of the Ottoman Empire are well known to have been originally slaves, brought up in the seraglio : and it

appears from Monsieur D'Herbelot, that the Mameluke Kings of Egypt themselves were originally slaves. Thus the advancement of Joseph to be Viceroy of Egypt, and Daniel, another Hebrew slave, to be chief minister of state in Babylon, corresponds with the modern usages of the East.—*Harmer.*

NO. 6—PIGEONS, NUMEROUS IN THE EAST.

xv. 9. *Take me a young pigeon.*

Norden informs us, that the number of pigeon-houses in Upper Egypt is so great, that each habitation terminates at the top by a pigeon-house, for three-fourths of the way from the first cataract to Cairo; and Le Bruyn says they are numerous also in Lower Egypt. Maundrell says that he found pigeons plentiful in some parts of Syria, and there is reason to suppose that the Jews also encouraged them in Judea. Where art inter-
venes not they build in those hollow places nature pro-
vides for them. The words of the Psalmist, *flee as
a bird to your mountain,* may refer to the doves flying thither when frightened by the sportsman.

Pigeons, as they grow old, lose their agreeable flavour and tenderness: hence, because the sacrifices of God were to be of the best, these birds were to be offered when they were young. There is not the same restraint as to turtle-doves: they are birds of passage, and are always good when they appear in those countries. In Egypt, indeed, they kept a number of tame turtle-doves; and they might be kept in many other places for pleasure and profit. According to Baron de Tott, the Turkish Government allows a certain premium in their favour. Dr. Chandler says, that departing from Magnesia he was surprised

upon entering the town of Guzel-Nissar, to see innumerable tame turtle-doves sitting on the branches of the trees, and upon the walls and roofs of the houses, cooing incessantly.

NO. 7.—ISHMAELITES LIVE BY PREY.

xvi. 12. *His hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him.*

The one is the natural consequence of the other. Ishmael lived by prey and rapine in the wilderness: and his posterity have all along infested Arabia and the neighbouring countries with their robberies and incursions: they live in a state of continual war with the rest of the world; and are both robbers by land, and pirates by sea. As they have been such enemies to mankind, it is no wonder that mankind have been enemies to them again; and that several attempts have been made to extirpate them. Now, as well as formerly, travellers are forced to go with arms, and in caravans or large companies, in order to defend themselves from the assaults of these free-booters, who run about in troops, and rob and plunder all whom they can by any means subdue. These robberies they justify by alledging the hard usage of their father Ishmael, who being turned out of doors by Abraham, had the open plains and desarts given him by God for his patrimony, with permission to take whatever he could find there; and on this account they think they may, with a safe conscience, indemnify themselves, as well as they can.—*Newton.*

I consider the prophecy concerning Ishmael and his descendants, the Arabs, as one of the most extraordinary that we meet with in the Old Testament.

God gave Ishmael that very wilderness which was before the property of no man, in which Ishmael was to erect a kingdom under the most improbable circumstances, *his hand was to be against every man, and every man's hand against him.* Never was a propheey more completely fulfilled: the power of the Arab descendants of Ishmael has subsisted from the earliest ages: and this prophecy alone, in the truth of which all sorts of religions agree, is of itself a sufficient proof of the Divine authority of the scriptures.—*Bruce.*

NO. 8.—EASTERN TENTS.

xviii. 1. *He sat in the tent door in the heat of the day.*

Dr. Chandler says, that those who lead a pastoral life in the East, frequently place themselves in a similar situation with the patriarch, to enjoy the benefit of the air, and to watch the flocks and cattle which may be feeding round the scattered booths. These booths were probably made of goats hair cloth, like the tents of the Arabs, or formed of boughs of trees. Whatever was the description of Abraham's tent, it appears that his sitting in the avenue to the tent was an innocent patriarchal indulgence.

According to D'Arvieux's account, the Arab Emirs or Princes have always two tents, one for themselves, and another for their wives; beside a number of small ones for their domestics, together with a tent of audience, which may be considered as a picture of patriarchal custom. Sir J. Chardin says, that their tents were black in general, and made of goats' hair; that they were pretty lofty, and adorned, to the height of four feet from the base, with mats made of reeds. It appears, that those Emirs have carpets and quilts

of all sorts, and some very beautifully stitched with silk and gold; and others woven and embroidered with flowers of gold and silver, like those of the Turks, and extremely handsome.—*Harmer.*

NO. 9.—ENTERTAINMENT OF STRANGERS IN THE EAST.

xviii. 8. *And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree.*

According to La Roque's account of the journey of Mons. D'Arvieux to the camp of the great Emir, it appears, that the Arabs are very hospitable. He says, when strangers enter a village they enquire for the Menzil, and beg to speak with the Sheikh, or head of the village: after saluting him they mention their wants, and the Sheikh kindly conducts them to the Menzil. If the strangers lodge in the village, the Sheikh's servants provide accordingly, and send it to the Menzil in wooden bowls, which they place on a great round straw mat, which usually serves for a table, and is furnished with flesh, fowl, eggs, butter, cheese, curds, fruit, salad, olives, &c. The Sheikh, generally, sits down with the strangers, and the most respectable of the village. They make no use of knives at table, because the meat is all cut into small pieces before it is roasted; and this, according to Russell and Pococke, is the common way of roasting meat both at Aleppo and in Egypt. Provisions cannot be preserved in the East from meal to meal as in Europe, therefore, the Easterns never bake their bread, nor kill their cattle 'till necessity requires it. Abraham's attitude was probably the effect of his reverence for the angels.—*Harmer.*

Another rite of hospitality observed towards strangers among the ancients, was washing the feet. “We were not above a musket shot from Anna, when we met with a comely old man, who came up to me, and taking my horse by the bridle, ‘Friend,’ said he, ‘come and wash thy feet, and eat bread at my house. Thou art a stranger; and since I have met thee upon the road, never refuse me the favour which I desire of thee.’ We went along with him to his house, where he feasted us in the best manner he could, giving us barley for our horses; and for us he killed a lamb and some hens.”—*Tavernier.*

By Jove the stranger and the poor are sent,
And what to those we give to Jove is lent;
Then food supply, and bathe his fainting limbs,
Where waving shades obseure the mazy streams.—*Pope.*

It appears, however, from the language of Abigail to David’s messengers, that this was a menial act: *let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my Lord.*—1 Sam. xxv. 41.

NO. 10.—DESCRIPTION OF EASTERN GATES.

xix. 1. *And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom.*

The gates of cities, or a void place, at the entrance of the gates, were anciently their market-places and courts of judicature. That they held their markets in their gates appears from 2 Kings, vii. 1. 18. where we read, that *a measure of fine flour was to be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria.* That this same place was used for a court of judicature, is manifest from Acts xvi. 19. *They caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the market place unto the rulers.* In

this place Lot probably sat for amusement and society, and not as a Magistrate, or they would hardly have reproached him for setting up to be a judge.—V. ix.

Prior to the erection of synagogues it appears that these places were occasionally devoted to religious purposes, see Prov. i. 20, 21. *Wisdom crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets: she crieth in the chief place of concourse in the opening of the gates, &c.* Here it was that the apostle Paul held frequent disputes with them that met with him. Acts xvii. 17.—*Harmer.*

Lord grant that the reader may not be ashamed when he speaks with his enemies in the gate. Ps. cxxvii. 5.

NO. 11.—DESTRUCTION OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH.

xix. 24. *The Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire.*

The plain of Sodom was probably intersected with canals, abounded with fruit, and had the richest pasture. This delightful plain must have been extensive, for the dead sea, which now occupies the spot, appears to be twenty four leagues long, and six or seven broad. Here we see that sin converts a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.—Psalm cvii. 34.

The truth of the narrative before us is confirmed by profane historians and by modern travellers. Diodorus Siculus says, that the water, which covers the country where these towns were formerly situated, is bitter and foetid to the last degree; insomuch that neither fish nor any other aquatic animals are able to live in it. Tacitus says, that a tradition prevailed in his days of certain cities being destroyed by thunder

and lightning, and of the plain in which they were situated being burnt up; and adds, that evident trace of such a catastrophe remained, and that whatever vegetation sprung up, gradually withered away and crumbled into dust.

Strabo, after describing the nature of the lake Asphaltis, says, that the whole of its appearance gives an air of probability to the prevailing tradition, that thirteen cities, the chief of which was Sodom, were at once destroyed by earthquakes, fire, and inundation of boiling sulphurous water. Thevenot says, that the water of this lake is so salt that it burns like fire the man who presumes to taste it—hence it is called the Salt Sea. He adds, that when the fish of the river Jordan come down so low, they strive to return against the stream, but such as are carried into it by the current of the water, immediately die. The land within three leagues round it is not cultivated, but is white, and mingled with salt and ashes. In short, we must think that there is a heavy curse of God upon that place, seeing it was once so pleasant a country. Lord, mercifully keep the reader from the miseries of the infernal *lake of fire and brimstone*, Rev. xx. 10 where *the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever*.—Rev. xiv, 11,

NO. 12.—THE EXPOSURE OF ISHMAEL.

xxi. 15. *And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs.*

We shall not be surprized to find that there were shrubs in that part of the wilderness, where Hagar wandered with her son, if we can believe Irwin's report of this desert, who declares that thorn-trees grow

there in abundance, with rosemary bushes, and shrubs of considerable fragrance.

It appears from comparing Gen. xvi. 16, with chap. xxi. 5. that Ishmael was fourteen years old when Isaac was born, and probably seventeen when Isaac was weaned, for it was the ancient custom in those countries to suckle children till they were three years old: see 2 Mac. vii. 27. and the account given of Samuel, 1 Sam. i. 22. Hagar's casting the fainting youth under a shrub, must mean her gently suffering him to drop within the shade of some bush, where he desired to lie, which indeed is the meaning of the original.—*Harmer.*

NO. 13.—CUSTOM OF MOURNING FOR THE DEAD.

xxiii. 2. *And Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her.*

Some have supposed, from comparing chap. xxii. 19, with the verse before us, that Abraham came from Beersheba to Hebron, a distance of twenty-four miles, to mourn for Sarah; but this is uncertain.

Potter says, that it was a custom among the Greeks to place their dead near their doors, and to attend them there with mourning; and, he thinks, that Abraham came from his own to Sarah's tent, and seated himself upon the ground near the door, where the corpse was laid, in order to perform the ordinary and public rites of mourning. Some passages of the Jewish Prophets allude to their stripping themselves of some of their clothes in time of deep humiliation. Micah says, *Therefore I will wail and howl: I will go stript and naked: I will make a wailing like the dragons, and mourning as the owls.*—*Micah, i. 8.* Saul's stripping himself, mentioned 1 Sam. xix. 24.

may be understood of his assuming the appearance of those that were deeply engaged in devotional exercises, into which he was unintentionally brought by prophetic influences.

According to Pitts, this ceremony is still practised in the East among the Mahomedan Pilgrims. He says, that on their way to Mecca the male Pilgrims strip themselves at Rabcock, and put on two large white cotton wrappers: one of them they put about the middle, which reaches down to the ancles, and with the other they cover the upper part of the body, except the head, which is left naked: they wear nothing beside, except a pair of sandals, with just leather enough to cover their toes: in this manner, like humble penitents, they approach the temple of Mecca, after having braved the scorching sun for no less than seven days, 'till the skin is burnt off their backs and arms, and their heads swollen to an amazing degree.—*Harmer.*

NO. 14.—DESCRIPTION OF EASTERN MONEY:

xxiii. 16. *And Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver.*

Ancient nations have discovered a singular coincidence in the management of their money. The Jews appear to have used silver in lumps, perhaps of various dimensions and weights; and certainly on some occasions at least, impressed with a particular stamp. The primitive race of men being shepherds, and their wealth consisting in their cattle, the earliest coins were stamped with the figure of an ox or a sheep. We are informed, that *Jacob bought a parcel of a field for a hundred pieces of money.* The original Hebrew translated pieces of money is *kesiloth*, which signifies-

lambs, with the figure of which the metal was, doubtless, stamped.

Macartney informs us, that there is no silver coin in China, notwithstanding payments are made with that metal, in masses of about ten ounces, having the form of the crucibles they are refined in, with the stamp of a single character upon them, denoting their weight. The practice of weighing money is general in Syria, Egypt, and all Turkey, as in the days of Abraham, when he purchased his sepulchre.—*Calmet.*

NO. 15.—EASTERN MANNER OF SWEARING.

xxiv. 2, 3. *Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh; and I will make thee swear by the Lord.*

Mr. Bruce informs us, that in his passage up the Nile, at a place called Shekh Ammer, the people, after joining hands, repeated a prayer, in which they invocated curses upon themselves and their children, if ever they lifted their hands against him in the field, the desert, or the river; and bound themselves to protect him, or his, who should fly to them for refuge, even at the risk of their lives, their families, and their fortunes. This manner of joining hands may cast light upon Prov. xi. 21, and 2 Kings, x. 15.

It appears that Abraham's ancient manner of swearing had been to lift up his hand unto the Lord, as he informs the King of Sodom Gen. xiv. 22. And thus in Homer we read of Agamemnon,

To all the Gods his sceptre he uplifts.

But when the Lord had covenanted with Abraham, and enjoined circumcision as the proper sign and seal of that covenant, then the mode of swearing appears to have been altered; thence, when his

servant would swear to be faithful to his master's orders, he is to put his hand under his master's thigh, and swear by the covenant of circumcision: this is the manner in which Joseph swore to meet the wishes of his father Israel, chap. xlvi. 29. Some suppose that this ceremony had some relation to their faith in the promise of God, to bless all the nations of the earth by means of one that was to descend from Abraham.—*Harmer, &c.*

NO. 16.—ANCIENT WELLS AND PITCHERS.

xxiv. 16. *She went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up.*

It appears from various authority, that some of the wells in the east were furnished with a flight of steps down to the water, which appears to be the case with the well before us. There are wells in Persia and Arabia in the driest places, and above all in the Indies with troughs and basins of stones by the side of them. It is manifest that this well had something of this kind, as also the Arabian well, to which the daughters of Jethro resorted, Ex. ii. 16.

Sir J. Chardin says that in Arabia and other places they cover their wells, lest the sand, which is much agitated by the winds, should stop them up. So we find Gen. xxix. 1, that they gathered their flocks together before they opened the well, and having drawn as much water as was necessary, they covered it up again immediately. He says he has known the Easterns lock up their wells or cisterns, when water has been scarce.

Niebuhr informs us that some of the wells are about hundred and sixty feet deep, dug out in sloping ground.

According to Thevenot, the people are obliged to carry lines and leathern buckets with them, to draw water; and with these the merchants, who travel in caravans, are generally furnished. This reminds us of the language of the woman of Samaria to our Lord, *Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep.*—John iv. 11..

Homer mentions the custom of women being employed in drawing water among the Pheacians, and Læstrygonians. Dr. Shaw says, the Moorish women in Barbary tie their sucking children behind them, and travel with their pitcher or goat-skin, two or three miles, to get water. This custom prevails in ancient Greece, and in other places.

The pitcher was a vessel much like our jars, and made of earth, which the Eastern women used to carry on the head or shoulder: yet that which was given Hagar was probably a leathern bottle, or vessel made of a skin.—*Harmer.*

NO. 17.—EASTERN ORNAMENTS.

xxiv. 22. *The man took a golden ear-ring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold, &c.*

It appears, from Sir J. Chardin, that the Asiatic females wore the most cumbrous ornaments. Some of their ear-rings were extremely large, made of several kinds of metal, wood, and horn, according to the quality of the people, and ornamented with different sorts of weighty pendants, which widen the hole of the ear to an amazing size. Some of those rings are ornamented with figures or charms, which, the Indians say, are preservatives against enchantment. Perhaps

the ear-rings, which Jacob buried with the strange gods of his family, were of this description.—Gen. xxxv. 4.

The bracelets put upon Rebecca weighed about five ounces; but Chardin says, he has seen them so ponderous, as to resemble manacles rather than bracelets. The females wear so many of them, as to cover the arm from the wrist to the elbow. Poor people have their ornaments of glass or horn. These are their riches, which they rarely remove from their bodies.

Chardin, who had large concerns in the jewel way, says, it was common for the Eastern females to wear a gold ring in the left nostril, which was bored low in the middle. This ring was commonly ornamented with two pearls, and a ruby between. That gentleman supposes, that the ring spoken of, v. 47, was not an ornament for the forehead, as we read, Ezek. xvi. 12, but that it should have been translated, *I put the ring on her nose.* They wore only one, and hence but one is mentioned. Harmer is of opinion, that certain passages in Isaiah, Ezekiel, and the Proverbs, should be understood accordingly. Mungo Park says, that the gold about an African lady of consequence, in full dress, may be worth from fifty to eighty pounds sterling. Men, as well as women, wore ornaments in their ears.—Exod. xxxii. 2. Judges viii. 24.—Harmer.

NO. 18.—VEILS USED BY FEMALES IN THE EAST.

xxiv. 65. *She took a veil and covered herself.*

This was the ceremony of presenting a bride to her intended husband. Dr. Russel gives us an account of a Maronite wedding, in which the bride's veil differed

from veils in common, she being veiled all over, and that with red gauze. Rebecca's veil was doubtless appropriate to that solemnity, in which she was probably presented to Isaac, in form, by her nurse and other female attendants.—*Harmer.*

Rebecca's covering herself may be considered as an expression of virgin modesty and reverence.

NO. 19.—DESCRIPTION OF ESAU'S POTTAGE.

xxv. 30. *Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage.*

Dr. Shaw informs us, that the inhabitants of Barbary use lentils boiled and stewed with oil and garlick, to make a pottage of a chocolate colour. This probably is a description of the red-pottage for which Esau, from thence called Edom, sold his *birth-right*.—*Burder.*

NO. 20—STOPPING OF WELLS, AN ACT OF HOSTILITY.

xxvi. 18. *And Isaac digged again the wells of water which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them.*

The stopping of wells was one method of taking vengeance on an enemy, or preventing the establishment of a professed friend. Niebuhr tells us, that the Turkish Emperors lay claim to that part of Arabia which lies between Mecca and the countries of Syria and Egypt; and that for the safety of their numerous caravans of pilgrims, they have garrisons in different parts of that mighty desert, near the wells which are made on the road.

In addition to this, they had a custom of annually bribing the Arab tribes, which lay near the road, to keep them from destroying the wells, and to escort the

pilgrims across their country ; but in the 18th century, a commander of a caravan of Syrian pilgrims, instead of giving the Sheekhs their usual presents, cut off their heads and sent them in triumph, to Constantinople. Two years after this, upon the return of the pilgrims, the Arabs assembled, it is said, to the number of eighty thousand, and pillaged the whole caravan ; and from that time the Turks have submitted to pay tribute to the Arabs.

D'Herbelot informs us, that Gianabi, a rebel of the tenth century, insulted the reigning Khalif, by presenting himself boldly before Bagdat, his capital ; and retiring, he filled up all the pits with sand, which had been dug in the road to Mecca for the benefit of the pilgrims. The Philistines were probably afraid of Isaac's power ; and considered the filling up of his wells as the most effectual method of removing him at a distance from them.—*Harmer.*

NO. 21.—EASTERN DISHES.

xxvii. 4. Make me savoury meat, such as I love.

De la Roque says, that among the Arabs, whose way of life resembles the Patriarchs, roast meat is peculiar to the tables of the Emirs or Princes, with lambs or kids stewed whole, and stuffed with bread, flour, fat, raisins, salt, pepper, saffron, mint, and other aromatic herbs.

Dr. Russel informs us, that at Aleppo, which is a large and rich commercial city, the food of the common people is plain and simple ; such as butter, bread, cheese, rice, fruits, and a little mutton. The better sort relish such dishes as are highly seasoned with salt and spices ; nevertheless, some of their dishes

are of a sweet nature. A stewed lamb, stuffed with rice, almonds, raisins, &c. is a favorite dish with them.—*Harmer.*

NO. 22.—VENERATION OF SACRED STONES.

xxviii. 18. *And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it.*

One of the idols in the pagoda of Jaggernaut is described by Captain Hamilton as a huge black stone, fifty cubits high. Tavernier observed an idol of black stone in the pagoda of Benares, and says, that one of the principal ceremonies, incumbent upon the priests of these stone deities, is to anoint them daily with odoriferous oils. According to Bochart, the sacred stones among the Pagans were supposed to be animated, by means of magical incantations, with a portion of the Deity, and were consulted on occasions of great and pressing emergency as a kind of divine oracle. Thus the setting up of a *stone* by this holy person, in grateful memory of the celestial vision, probably became the occasion of idolatry in succeeding ages.—*Maurice's Indian Antiquities.*

NO. 23—JACOB'S PILLAR.

xxviii. 22. *This stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house.*

Strange as language of this description may appear to us, that a *stone* should be called a *house*, yet Major Symes informs us, that the temples of the kingdom of Ava are built without cavity of any sort. He says that, at Pegu, the noble edifice of Shoemadoo, or the

Golden Supreme, is a pyramidal building composed of brick and mortar, without excavation or aperture of any sort; octagonal at the base, and spiral at the top. Each side of the base measures one hundred and sixty two feet. The extreme height of the edifice, from the level of the country, is three hundred and sixty-one feet; and above the interior terrace three hundred and thirty-one feet. Along the whole extent of the Northern face of the upper terrace, there is a wooden shed for the convenience of devotees, who come from a distant part of the country. There are several low benches near the foot of the temple, on which the person who comes to pray places his offering, commonly consisting of boiled rice, a plate of sweet-meats, or cocoa-nuts fried in oil. When it is given the devotee cares not what becomes of it; the crows and wild dogs often devour it in the presence of the donor, who never attempts to disturb the animals.—*Burder.*

Places particularly devoted to prayer and sacrifice were called *God's house*—here God particularly revealed himself.—v. 17.; and it was considered as the place of his abode—*This is the hill which God desireth to dwell in; yea, the Lord will dwell in it for ever.*—Psalm lxviii. 16.

NO. 24.—ORIGIN OF EASTERN NAMES.

xxix. 32. *And she called his name Reuben, for she said, surely the Lord hath looked upon my affliction.*

Mungo Park informs us, that the custom of naming children from particular incidents and circumstances, is not peculiar to the Jews.—The children of the Mandingees are not always named after their rela-

tions; but frequently in consequence of some remarkable occurrence: thus, my landlord at Kamalia was called Karfa, a word signifying to replace; because he was born shortly after the death of one of his brothers. Other names are descriptive of good or bad qualities: as Modi, a good man; Fadibba, father of the town, &c. Indeed, the very names of their towns have something descriptive in them; as Sibidooloo, the town of Siboa trees, &c. Others appear to be given by way of reproach: as Bammakoo, was a crocodile, &c. Among the Negroes, every individual, besides his own proper name, has likewise a kongtong or surname, to denote the family or clan to which he belongs. Every Negro plumes himself on the importance or antiquity of his clan, and is much flattered when he is addressed by his kongtong.

According to D'Herbelot, it is not unusual for the Orientals to go by the rule of contrary in giving names: thus camphire, which is a very white and odoriferous gum or resin, is one of those names given to the Negroes or Blacks in the East.

Homer gives unto the mother, the prerogative of naming the child:—

Him on his mother's knees, when babe he lay,

She nam'd Arneus, on his natal day.

ODYSS. POPE.

NO. 25.—JACOB'S FLIGHT.

xxxii. 21. He fled with all that he had.

It appears that, whilst Laban and his daughter dwelt in a house, they that tended the flocks had tents for their accommodation. The time of sheep-shearing, in the Holy land, is about six weeks or two months earlier than sheep-shearing among us in England.

Those seasons being attended with great festivity, they probably erected superior tents for the reception and entertainment of their friends. Jacob having invited his wives to the entertainment, and having all his household stuff brought to him, could decamp immediately with his flocks and herds. Laban's distance from Jacob was so great, that he did not receive the intelligence until the third day.

According to Dr. Pococke, the Easterns would occasionally, in the summer season, hold their feasts, accompanied with music, under their tents. It appears for a number of years, that even the Persian Monarchs, in the summer season, dwelt in tents; and it is likely that Solomon did the same.—Cant. i. 5.

La Roque informs us, that the common Arabs had hair sacks, trunks, and baskets, in which to carry their furniture, which consisted of kettles, pots, pitchers, wooden bowls, and hand-mills. The bowls and dishes of the Arab Emirs were frequently made of copper, neatly tinned. This is probably a description of the vessel which Jael set before Sisera.—Harmer.

NO 26.—EASTERN SINGING.

xxxi. 27. That I might have sent thee away with mirth, and with songs.

According to the Prefetto of Egypt, whose journal was published by the Bishop of Clogher, it was common to part with songs. The travelling songs of the Easterns appear to have been extemporaneous: the songs of the Israelitish women, when they went forth to meet King Saul, after that David had smitten the Philistines, appear to have been of the same kind,—

They answered one another as they played, and said, Saul has slain his thousands; and David his ten thousands.—1 Sam. xviii. 7. This it appears was the nature of some of their devotional songs in the church at Corinth. 1 Cor. xiv. 26.; and, from the Apostle's language to the Colossians, chap. iii. 16. it appears to have been an ordinary vehicle of instruction and admonition.—*Harmer.*

Aristotle says, that people anciently sung their laws; and that the Agathyrsi continued to do so in his days. Tully also informs us that it was customary, with the old Romans, to have the virtues and praises of famous men sung to a pipe at their feasts. This he apprehends they learned from the ancient Pythagoreans in Italy; who were accustomed to deliver verses containing those precepts which were the greatest secrets in their philosophy; and composed the minds of the scholars to tranquillity, by songs and instruments of music.

NO. 27.—METHOD OF TRAVELLING IN THE EAST.

xxxii. 34. *Now Rachel had taken the images and put them in the camel's furniture, and sat upon them.*

The Easterns had numerous beasts of carriage, such as horses, camels, mules, and asses. Pococke informs us that one method of conveyance, among the Easterns, is a sort of round basket with a cover, slung on each side of a camel, which holds all their necessaries, whilst a person sits cross-legged upon the camel. Thevenot says, that they have cunes or hampers, like cradles, slung upon their camels, one on each side; these are made large enough to hold one person; over whom they lay a covering, to keep him from the rain and

sun ; which covering, according to Moryson, is made of red cloth. This method of travelling, according to Maillet, was a mark of distinction. La Roque says, that ordinary women are mounted on camels, after the manner of the Arabs, having about six ells of serge, which they call the hiran, laid upon a wooden saddle ; which, when they bait, and at night, is converted into a mattress. It was probably under this that Rachel hid her father's teraphim, and on which she sat, according to their custom, in the tent, and was therefore unsuspected.—*Harmer.*

NO. 28.—SUDDEN CHANGE OF WEATHER.

xxxii. 40. *In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night.*

Jacob's complaint in relation to Mesopotamia, is elucidated by Doubdan, who informs us that, on the 16th of May, he found the heat in the day time to be so intolerable near Tyre, that he was obliged to discontinue his journey ; and at night, near the rocks and ruins of Tyre, his sufferings were as severe from the violent cold, as they had been from the burning heat.

Rauwolf informs us that, in going down the Euphrates, he was obliged at night to wrap himself in a frieze coat, to keep himself from the frost and dew. Thus it hath pleased the Most High to temper the heat of the sun by the coolness of the night ; and the copiousness of the dews, which at times soak the earth, and without which the greatest part of the East would be an entire desart. With the severities of this diurnal change was the King of Judah threatened by the Lord. *His dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost.*—*Jer. xxxvi. 30.—Harmer.*

NO. 29.—SITTING ON STONES.

xxxii. 46. *And they took stones and made an heap, and they did eat there upon the heap.*

The Hebrew particle in this passage translated *upon* sometimes signifies *near*, as in Gen. xxiv. 13. *Behold I stand here by the well of water, &c.*: and so in many other places in the book of Genesis. Nieburh says, that when he was admitted to an audience of the Imam of Yemen, at Sena of Arabia, he found some of the principal officers of the Court, sitting in a scattered manner, in the shade upon *stones*.

Perhaps the ground was wet when Laban overtook Jacob in Mount Gilead, and of course unfit to sit upon; and hence, Jacob might have given orders to gather stones for their accommodation. It might also appear that their eating the feast of reconciliation upon that heap, which was to be the lasting memorial of their friendship, would more deeply impress the mind, and render the covenant more durable.—*Harmer.*

Calmet supposes that Jacob's pillar, verse 45, was probably a central stone, the highest he could find within a competent distance; and then forming a circle of stones, with intervals between them, they sacrificed upon the centre stone, and ate upon (or at) the circle. He thinks the name which Laban gave it, signified *the circle of testimony*; and that which Jacob gave it, signified *the circle of witness*.

NO. 30.—PURCHASING OF WIVES IN THE EAST.

xxxiv. 12. *Ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me.*

It appears, according to La Roque, that the Arabs purchase their wives; and hence, Arabian fathers are

never more happy than when they have many daughters. La Roque says, when a young man would treat with a person, whose daughter he is inclined to marry, it is common to say, “will you give me your daughter for fifty sheep—for six camels—or for a dozen cows? &c.” If the parties agree, the contract is drawn up by an Arabian Judge.

With regard to Shechem, who was an Hivite Prince of the land of Canaan, he proposed both a *dowry* and a *gift*: the dowry was a settlement for the wife, that in case of his death, or being divorced, she might have something to live upon; and the *gift* appears to be a present to the father, in order to obtain his consent. Thus, Saul required a present at the hands of David in order that Michal (Saul’s daughter) might become David’s wife—1 Sam. xviii. 25.

Chardin informs us, that notwithstanding it was common for the father to sell the daughter, yet none but very poor people married a daughter in the East, without giving her a female slave for an handmaid—there being no hired servants there, as in Europe:—thus, *Laban gave unto his daughter Leah, Zilpah his maid, for an handmaid.*—Gen. xxix. 24.—Harmer.

NO. 31.—MEMORIALS OF THE DEAD.

xxxv. 20. *And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave: that is the pillar of Rachel’s grave unto this day.*

According to Doubdan, there are in the East three different kinds of memorials for the dead, such as buildings, trees, and flat grave-stones: that which is shewn at present as the monument of Rachel’s grave, is a large dome of masonry, without any ornament, supported by four large square pillars, and surrounded with a

low wall, in which inclosure are two other tombs of a small size, but of similar shape with the large one : That which perpetuated the remembrance of Deborah was an oak, verse 8, which from that time was distinguished by the name of *The Oak of Weeping.*—*Harmer.*

NO. 32.—ORIENTAL CARAVANS.

xxxvii. 28. *There passed by Midianites, merchantmen ; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver.*

A caravan is an assemblage of travellers, partly pilgrims, and partly merchants ; who coalesce for their personal defence against Arabic violence, through hideous wilds and burning desarts. Colonel Campbell says, a caravan is never formed but with the permission and licence of the prince ; in which licence the number of men, carriages, beasts of burden, &c. are all specified.—*Calmet.*

The caravans, which were composed of people of different countries, were denominated a caravan of that people to which the Caravan-bashaw or Captain of it belonged. The persons who composed the caravan before us, and to whom Joseph was sold, were *Ishmaelites*, who dwelt in the land of Midian. Although *Midian* was a son of Abraham, by *Keturah*, Gen. xxv. 2, and *Ishmael* a son of his by *Hagar*, yet it appears from Judges viii. 22, 24, that *Ishmaelites* and *Midianites* were names sometimes applied to the same people—they both dwelt in the East ; and in the age in which this book was written, were probably called in a loose and general way, *Ishmaelites*.

Numerous caravans travel the Eastern roads annually, on pilgrimage, through the deserts to Mecca. These caravans were very extensive. Maillet supposes that the caravans which went from Egypt to Mecca, in the year 1697, amounted, at least, to fifty thousand souls, and as many camels. Pitts tells us, that they travel four camels abreast. The caravan is divided into companies, each of which has its name, and consists, it may be, of several thousand camels. At the head of each company is a gentleman or officer, who is carried in a vehicle like a horse-litter; and the camel which carries his treasure has two bells, about the size of our market bells, hanging one on each side; the sound of which may be heard a great way off. Many of the camels have bells about their necks and legs; which, with the servants singing all night, make a pleasant noise, and the journey passes away delightfully; and thus they travel 'till they come to Grand Cairo.

The sun being exceedingly hot in those countries, they avoid travelling much by day; so that their principal travelling is in the night season, with lights carried on the tops of poles, to direct them in their march. Pitts says, "these lights are somewhat like stoves, into which they put short dry wood. Every cotter has one or more of these poles. They are of different figures—one oval—another triangular, &c. so that every one knows his respective cotter, by the number and figure of these stoves. The poles are carried in the front, and set up in the place where the caravan is to pitch." The blowing of a trumpet is the signal of the march.—*Harmer.*

NO. 33.—TOKEN OF GRIEF.

xxxvii. 34. *And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins.*

The Easterns usually wore new clothes at the solemnization of a time of rejoicing; and expressed their sorrow, in times of calamity, by rending their clothes.

Latinus tears his garments as he goes,
Both for his public and his private woes.

DRYDEN.

Thus we find, when the Patriarch, Jacob, apprehended that his son was dead, he *rent his clothes*. Levi says, that among the jews the custom was, for lamenting the death of a brother, sister, son, daughter, or wife, to cut the upper garment with a knife, on the right side, and rend it a hand's breadth; but for a father or mother, the rent was made on the left side, and that in all the garments, as coat, waistcoat, &c.—*Burder.*

It appears, that the patriarchal sacks were sometimes made of woollen; and hence some infer, that the *sackcloth*, with which the Easterns occasionally clothed themselves, means coarse woollen cloth, of texture resembling their sacks; but it is certain that they had also *sackcloth of hair*.—Rev. vi. 12.

NO. 34.—CIVIL INVESTITURE IN EGYPT.

xli. 42. *And Pharoah took off his ring from his hand, and put it on Joseph's hand; and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen.*

The manner in which Pharoah treated Joseph, was the ancient mode of investing with the highest degree of subordinate power in Egypt, and with some small variation still continues in existence; only the robes of the

modern Sheekh billet* are faced with costly furs the Pasha treats him with sherbet; and, when he departs, presents him with a horse richly caparisoned. The ring here alluded to was an instrument of authority, by which he had power to sign any decree in the King's name. Esther iii. 10, and viii. 2.

According to Hasselquist, the Egyptian flax appears to have been very soft and good; but not better than the flax of Europe. If the linen wrapped round their mummies be a specimen of their manufacture, it doth by no means equal what is at present made in this country. Hasselquist supposes it to be the finest of the Egyptian linen, because it was used for persons of great distinction, and about whom they spared no expence. The clothing of the common people of Egypt, is only linen dyed blue with indigo.—*Harmer.*

NO. 35.—THE CORN OF EGYPT.

xli. 47. *And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by hand-fulls.*

Dr. Shaw informs us, that in Barbary it is common to see one grain produce ten or fifteen stalks. Some grains of the Murwaany wheat, which he brought with him to Oxford, and sowed in the physic garden, threw out, each of them, fifty stalks. Mugeratty, one of the late Kaleefas, or Viceroyes of the province of Ilemsan, brought with him, to Algiers, a root that yielded fourscore; and says, that the Prince of the Western Pilgrims sent one to the Bashaw of Cairo that yielded sixscore. Pliny mentions some that bore three or four hundred.

* The Sheekh is one who acts under the government of the Pasha, who is the representative of the Grand Seignior.

It appears that some of the Barbary corn, both wheat and barley, throws forth two ears from one stalk, whilst each of these ears will often shoot out into a number of lesser ones, thereby affording a most plentiful increase. Many of these large prolific ears coming up upon one stalk, may explain what is said of the seven plentiful years in Egypt, that *the Earth brought forth by handfuls*.—*Harmer*.

NO. 36.—ORIGIN OF PROFANE SWEARING.

xlii, 16. *By the life of Pharoah, surely ye are spies.*

Selden observes, that the names of Gods were given to Kings at an early period; and that it probably arose from the excellence of their heroic virtue, which made them benefactors to mankind; hence arose the custom of swearing by them. Extraordinary as this kind of oath may appear to us, it still continues in the East. Mr. Hanway says, the most sacred oath among the Persians is “by the King’s head.” Thevenot says, his subjects never look upon him but with fear and trembling; they have such respect for him, and pay such blind obedience to all his orders, that, however unjust his commands may be, they perform them, though against the laws both of God and of nature. If they swear by the King’s head, their oath is more authentic, and of greater credit, than if they swore by all that is most sacred in Heaven and upon Earth. In Egypt, if any man swore by the King’s head, and was found to have sworn falsely, he received a capital punishment for the offence.—*Burder*.

NO. 37.—ISRAEL’S PRESENT TO JOSEPH.

xliii. 11. *Take of the best fruits in the land in your*

vessels and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts and almonds.

The balm was a sweet smelling and medicinal gum extracted from the balm-tree, which is cultivated in the manner of the vine. The balm of Canaan, near Engedi, and that of Gilead, were reckoned to be the best.

There are various sorts of *honey* used by the Easterns, such as the honey of grapes, the honey of canes, and the honey of the palm-tree, as well as the honey of bees. Dr. Shaw informs us, that the honey of the palm-tree or of dates has a more luscious sweetness than the proper honey, and stands in high esteem by persons of fashion. The people of Barbary procure it by cutting off the top of the tree, and receiving the sap in a sort of basin scooped in the top of the trunk. It appears from the language of David, that there is a peculiar delicacy in the flavour of honey in the comb—*sweeter than honey and the honey-comb.*—Psalm xix. 10.

The *spices and myrrh* were aromatic drugs: with these they seasoned their meat, gave flavour to their wines; perfumed their persons and beds, embalmed dead bodies, and burnt them in honour to their Kings.

Dr. Shaw and Sir J. Chardin suppose, that the *nuts* mentioned by the Patriarch were the pistachio-nuts; and add, that the pistachios of Syria are the best in the world. The almond-tree appears to be the first that blossoms in spring, and the last that fades in harvest: its fruit is nourishing and medicinal. The *almonds* which grew on Aaron's rod, when laid up before the Lord, imported the duration of the priest-

hood in his family. Sir J. Chardin supposes, that all these things were carried in goat or kid skins.—

Harmer.

NO. 38.—EASTERN SALUTATION.

xliii. 29. *God be gracious unto thee, my son.*

The salutations of the Easterns are often marked with sublimity and devotion: thus when Boaz came from Bethlehem he said unto the reapers, *the Lord be with you*; and they answered, *the Lord bless thee*. The heathens are said to have their compliments of this description, and would not touch their harvest 'till Ceres had been invoked:—

Thus in the spring, and thus in summer's heat,
Before the sickles touch the rip'ning wheat,
On Ceres call; and let the lab'ring hind,
With oaken wreaths, his hollow temples bind:
On Ceres let him call, and Ceres praise
With uncouth dances, and with country lays.

DRYDEN.

Chardin says, that the manner in which Joseph received Benjamin is a simple salutation in Asia, and used instead of those complimentary assurances which are customary in the West. But according to accounts, the Easterns, who are so eloquent in their mutual good wishes, are some of the most double-tongued people in the world: to use the language of David, *they bless with their mouths, but they curse inwardly*. Thus Joab saluted Amasa with apparent affection, but stabbed him in the midst of his caresses; and Judas betrayed the son of man with a kiss.—*Harmer.*

NO. 39.—JOSEPH'S FEAST FOR HIS BRETHREN.

xlili. 34. *And he took and sent messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs.*

Sir J. Chardin says, that the Easterns do not commonly make use of tables or chairs; but they cover the floors of their houses with mats, pieces of felt, or carpets, which serve instead of a table. The opulent have embroidered or stitched coverings four feet wide, and among people of quality the embroidery is of gold. When the provisions are served up, they spread a cloth in proportion to their company: the dishes are set before the master of the house, the principal guest, or in the middle of the hall, and a carver helps the company. He adds, the great men of state are always by themselves in those feasts, and helped to double or treble the quantity of other visitants.

Olearius says, it is the Persian custom for the domestic who serves at table to help the company to four or five different sorts of meat at once. At an entertainment given in India by the Great Mogul's brother-in-law, the most honourable had the greatest variety of dishes set before them. Here we see that Benjamin's having *five times as much as his brethren,* may mean, that he had five times as much of every thing as they; that is, enough set before him, of each sort of provisions, for his complete repast, in case he should prefer one thing to the rest; or else that a much greater variety was set before him than before his brethren; five or ten different things placed before him, and only one or two before his brethren. Joseph probably sat at the upper end of the hall; his brethren

at the lower end ; and the Egyptians by the sides.—

Harmer

NO. 40.—PATRIARCHAL SACKS.

xliv. 1. *Fill the men's sacks with food as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth.*

Among the Easterns it is customary to pack up their articles in different parcels, in goat or kid-skins, and put them into a large coarse woollen sack, guarded with leather to resist the water. There appear to be two sorts of sacks taken notice of in the history before us, one of which was used for the corn, and the other for the baggage. In chap. xlvi. v. 27. we read, *as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the Inn, he espied his money; for behold it was in his sack's mouth.* Had this been a sack of wheat, it would follow that they gave their beasts of burden wheat at that time for their food, which is not at all probable.—*Chardin.*

NO. 41.—JOSEPH'S CUP OF DIVINATION.

xliv. 5. *Is not this it in which my Lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth.*

There was a cup among the Persians called *Jami Jemsheed*, the cup of *Jemsheed* a very ancient King of Persia, by which they were supposed to know all things, past, present, and to come. Julius Serenus tells us, that the method of divining by the cup among the Abyssinians, Chaldees, and Egyptians, was to fill it first with water, then to throw into it their plates of gold and silver, together with some precious stones, whereon were engraven certain characters; and after

that, the persons who came to consult the oracle used certain incantations, and so calling upon the devil received their answers several ways; sometimes by articulate sounds, sometimes by the characters which were in the cup rising upon the surface of the water, and many times by the visible appearing of the persons themselves about whom the oracle was consulted. Cornelius Agrippa says, that the manner of some was to pour melted wax into the cup, wherein was water, which wax would range itself into order, and so form answers according to the questions proposed.

When Norden was at Derri, in the farthest part of Egypt, in a very dangerous situation, from which he and his company endeavoured to extricate themselves by exerting great spirit, a spiteful and powerful Arab, in a threatening way, told one of their people, whom they had sent to him, that he knew what sort of people they were, that he had consulted his cup, and had found by it that they were those of whom one of their Prophets had said, that Franks would come in disguise, and passing every where, examine the state of the country, and afterwards bring over a great number of other Franks, conquer the country, and exterminate all. This is what Joseph meant, when he talked of divining by his cup.—*Harmer.*

NO. 42.—JOSEPH'S GIFT OF RAIMENT.

xlv. 22. *To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment.*

De la Motraye has favoured us with some information upon this subject. The Visier entered at another door, and their Excellencies rose to salute him after their manner, which was returned by a little inclining

of his head: after which he sat down on the corner of his sofa, which is the most honourable place; then his Chancellor, his Kiabia, and the Chiaouz Bashaw came and stood before him, till coffee was brought in; after which M^e de Chateauneuf presented M. de Ferriol to him, as his successor; who delivered him the King's letters, complimenting him as from his Majesty and himself; to which the Visier answered very obligingly. After some discourse, which turned upon the reciprocal readiness of propension towards the continuance of a good intelligence between the Porte and the Court of France, they gave two dishes of coffee to their Excellencies with sweetmeats, and after that perfumes and sherbet; then they clothed them with eaffetans* of a silver brocade, with large silk flowers; and to those that were admitted into the apartments with them they gave others of brocade, almost all silk; except some slight gold or silver flowers, according to the custom usually observed towards all foreign Ministers.

NO. 43.—JOSEPH CLOSING THE EYES OF ISRAEL.

xlvi. 4. *Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.*

The Lord had promised Israel, prior to his going down into Egypt, that Joseph should put his hand upon his eyes; which appears to be an ancient custom among the Jews, Greeks, and Romans, for relatives to close the eyes of departed friends. Thus Tobias is said to have shut the eyes of his wife's father and mother, and to have buried them honourably. Maimonidas represents it as a customary rite. Homer

* Caffetans are long vests of gold or silver brocade, flowered with silk.

describes Ulysses thus expressing himself on the death of Socus,

Ah, wretch ! no father shall thy corpse compose,
Thy dying eyes no tender mother close.

Burder.

NO. 44.—SCEPTRE AN ENSIGN OF AUTHORITY.

xlix. 10. *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come.*

Sceptres, or staves of some kind or other, have been among almost all nations the ensigns of civil authority, as they are to this day; being in themselves very proper emblems of power extended, or acting at a distance from the person. Achilles, who was the chief of a Grecian tribe or clan, is described in *Homer* as holding a sceptre or staff, which

The delegates of Jove, dispensing laws,
Bear in their hands.

Burder.

The Jewish Senators did long struggle with Herod about the government, and did not yield it up to him till his last year, when they took an oath of fealty to him, which was after Christ was born: nor indeed was the sceptre quite gone from them then; for that council still had the power, though not of life and death, yet of civil and ecclesiastical matters.—John xviii. 31. So that if the sceptre was gone, the law-giver remained there still: nor was their government and commonwealth quite destroyed until the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus.—*Poole.*

NO. 45.—JOSEPH A FRUITFUL BOUGH.

xlix. 22, 23. *Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall.*

The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him.

In all hot countries water is extremely conducive to the growth of vegetables. Trees planted near the water grow to an amazing size. According to Maillet, the wild Arabs of those countries are great plunderers of fruit ; and the Egyptians, to secure it, often gathered the fruit before it was fully ripe. It is probable, that the Arabs used not to scale the wall, but to throw their bludgeons at those luxuriant boughs which ran over the wall of the inclosure, and gather up the fruit which fell on the outside. The word translated *arrows* means *sticks*, or *bludgeons* as well as *arrows*.

It doth not appear to be an allusion to the *vine* ; because the grapes could not be thus dislodged by bludgeons, or the fall would spoil the fruit. It might mean the pomegranate, whose fruit has so hard a shell as neither to be injured by the fall, or destroyed by an accidental blow of the stick.

Joseph flourished in the favour of his father and his God, like a tree by a reservoir of water ; but his envious brethren by selling him for a slave did, for a time, disgrace him, as a bough is disgraced by knocking off its leaves and fruit.—*Harmer.*

NO. 46.—ISRAEL'S CHARGE TO HIS SONS.

xlix. 29. *And he charged them and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people : bury me with my fathers.*

Princes and persons of quality, who died in foreign parts, were usually carried into their own country, to be buried with their fathers : and from Jacob's injunction we find that it was practised in the patriarchal

times. It was also the custom of the Greeks. Homer represents the shade of Patroclus as thus addressing Achilles ;

Hear then ; and as in fate and love we join,
O suffer that my bones may rest with thine !
Together have we liv'd, together bred,
One house receiv'd us, and one table fed ;
That golden urn, thy goddess mother gave,
May mix our ashes in one common grave.

Burder.

NO. 47.—ASIATIC EMBALMING, &c.

Gen. 26. So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old : and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

The Jewish method of embalming was different from the Egyptian. The Egyptians used to embowel their dead, but the Jews contented themselves with an external unction ; and, instead of myrrh and cassia, they made use of myrrh and aloes, which is manifest in the case of our Lord.

Herodotus says, that among the Egyptians it was customary for the body to be laid in nitre thirty days, to dry up all its superfluous and noxious moisture ; after which it was anointed with gums and spices for the space of forty days ; so that the body lay seventy days in the hands of the embalmers, during which time the Egyptians mourned for Israel.—Gen. 1. 3.

Thevenot informs us, that the Egyptians used to swathe with an enormous length of bandage. On examining one of their mummies, he found more than a thousand ells of filleting about the body, besides what was wrapped about the head. The Jews probably swathed the body after the same manner ; but the heads of Lazarus and our Lord were simply bound.

round with a napkin, after the present Mahomedan custom.

Josephus, speaking of the funeral of Aristobulus, the last of the High-priests of the family of the Maccabees, says, that the larger the quantity of the spicēs used in their interments the greater honour was thought to be done to the dead: and thus we may easily account for the quantity procured by Nicodemus for our Lord.—John xix. 39.

Coffins were not commonly used in the East. It appears that Elisha was not put into a *coffin* (2 Kings, xiii. 21.), neither the body of our Lord. Among the ancient Egyptians, however, some of them had this mark of distinction. Their coffins were various, made of stone, sycamore wood, and a kind of paste-board, formed by folding and glueing cloth together, which they curiously plastered and painted with hiéroglyphics. Thus Joseph was treated after the most sumptuous manner of the Egyptians.—*Harmer.*

EXODUS.

NO. 48.—BATHING IN THE NILE.

ii. 5. *And the daughter of Pharoah came down to wash herself at the river.*

THE people of Egypt, and particularly the females of that country, express their veneration for the benefits received from the Nile by plunging into it at the time of its beginning to overflow the country; which was probably the case with Pharoah's daughter.

This, according to Maillet, was in the beginning of May.

Irwin says, that on the 13th of August he was awakened from his first sleep by a band of Egyptian females; who, with singing, dancing, and music, were about to visit the river, and bless the benevolent power who yearly distributes his waters to supply the necessities of the natives.

It appears probable from Irwin's travels, that those females do not disrobe themselves at those seasons; but that they enter the river with their clothes and even ornaments upon them. This is done, not from a desire of purification as the Indian females go into the Ganges, but merely from a principle of veneration or devotion.—*Harmer.*

NO. 49.—FIRE, A TOKEN OF A DIVINE PRESENCE.

iii. 2. *And the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire.*

The traditional notion of a miraculous light or fire being the token of a divine presence prevailed among the Greeks in the time of Homer; for, after relating that the Goddess Minerva attended on Ulysses with her golden lamp, or rather torch, and afforded him a resplendent light, he makes Telemachus cry out to his father in rapture,

What miracle thus dazzles with surprise?
Distinct in rows the radiant columns rise.
The walls, where'er my wondering sight I turn,
And roofs, amidst a blaze of glory burn:
Some visitant of pure ethereal race,
With his bright presence, deigns the dome to grace.

Burder.

NO. 50.—THE FISH OF EGYPT.

vii. 17. *And the fish that is in the river shall die.*

Mallett assures us, that there are carp in the Nile, with various other kinds of fish; yet but few of our river fish are found there. He says, in the months of December, January, and February, they catch very good herrings in the neighbourhood of Cairo.

Sandys says, that in going up the Nile they bought as much fish for six-pence as would have satisfied twenty people, but by reason of the muddy channel they were not very wholesome. Egmont and Hayman mention four sorts of fish taken from the Nile, which are very palatable: one of these is said to weigh between two and three hundred pounds; and they are caught at all seasons of the year.

The Egyptians have various ways of catching their fish. Dr. Shaw informs us, that they catch them with toils: these toils are made of hurdles of reeds, fixed in various directions, and ending in a point, into which they drive their fish, and take them out with nets or baskets. It appears that they commonly fish with the hook, and never with nets, if Mallett's account be accurate; which appears strange, when we consider that they were anciently common in Egypt. *They that spread nets upon the water shall languish.*—Isa. xix. 8.

Dr. Pococke says, that the Egyptians eat fish, in common, with pleasure. In the months of April and May it is their principal support. Some they eat fresh, and others dried in the sun, which, though it comes from the Red Sea, is prepared at Damietta.—

Harmer.

NO. 51.—WATER OF THE NILE.

vii. 18. *And the Egyptians shall lothe to drink of the water of the river.*

It appears that the Nile water is both delicious and wholesome. Maillet says, that the Turks excite themselves to drink it by eating salt ; and say, that if Mahomed had drunk of it he would have begged of God to be continued on earth, that he might enjoy its delicacy. When the Egyptians leave their country, they speak of nothing with so much pleasure as that of their returning to drink the Nile water. This appears to be the only water drinkable in Egypt. The well-water is so detestable and unwholesome, that a fountain is a kind of prodigy in the country ; and as for rain water, very little falls in Egypt.

Le Bruyn informs us, that the water of the Nile being thick and muddy, they purify it either by a paste of almonds, or by filtrating it through pots of white earth. It appears that the Nile begins to rise about the end of May, at which time the water is discoloured and unwholesome, and continues in this state from twenty to forty days, during which time the inhabitants of Cairo drink water preserved in cisterns under their houses and mosques.

The Nile is the only river in Egypt ; but it is divided into seven branches before it falls into the sea. Several vast lakes are formed by the inundations of the Nile, and numerous canals made by art for the watering of their lands. They have also numerous reservoirs for retaining and preserving the water ; which being sweet, is used by them when the Nile corrupts.

Maurice says, that Egypt is one continued vale, above seven hundred miles long, and naturally barren.

Dr. Shaw says, that the Egyptians make great rejoicings when the Nile rises *sixteen cubits*; yet it appears that, to answer the demands of the whole country, they wished it to rise a little higher. The Doctor says, that the soil near the banks is thirty feet deep; but at the utmost extremity of the inundation it is but a few inches. They shall *loathe* to drink of that water which they had preferred to all the waters of the universe.—*Harmer.*

NO. 52.—MOSES SPRINKLING ASHES IN EGYPT.

ix. 8. *And the Lord said unto Moses and unto Aaron, take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward the Heaven in the sight of Pharaoh.*

This mandate appears to have been exceedingly significant. The ashes were to be taken from the fiery furnace; which in the scriptures was used as a type of the Israelites' slavery, and of all the cruelty which they experienced in Egypt. This process has an allusion to an idolatrous and cruel rite, which was common among the Egyptians, and to which it is opposed as a contrast. They had several cities stiled Typhonian: such as Heliopolis, Idithyia, Abarei, and Bersiris. In these, at particular seasons, they sacrificed men. The objects thus destined were persons of bright hair and a particular complexion, such as were seldom to be found among the native Egyptians. Hence we may infer that they were foreigners; and it is probable, that while the Israelites resided in Egypt they were chosen from their body. They were burnt alive upon an high altar, and thus sacrificed for the good of the people. At the close of the sacrifice the

priests gathered together the ashes of those victims, and scattered them upwards in the air; in order, probably, that where any atom of this dust was wafted, a blessing might be entailed. The like was done by Moses with the ashes of the fiery furnace, but with a different intention: they were scattered abroad, that where any portion alighted, it might prove a plague and a curse to this ungrateful, cruel, and infatuated people.—*Bryant.*

NO. 53.—METHOD OF TRAVELLING ON FOOT.

xii. 11. *And thus shall ye eat it: with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand.*

Such as travel on foot in the East fasten their garments at a greater height from the feet than at other times. The dress of the Easterns is a long vest, reaching down to the calf of the leg, and fastened upon the loins by a girdle, which goes three or four times round them: some draw up the vest above the girdle, just as the Monks do when they travel on foot; but the general way is to tuck up the fore-part of the vest, and fasten it into the girdle; by this means they walk more commodiously, having the leg and knee unembarrassed. This, probably, was the manner in which the Israelites ate the first passover, on the eve of their leaving Egypt.

Their having shoes on their feet at this repast was rather singular, for, in common, when they eat they put off their shoes, for various reasons: one is, that they do not use tables and chairs in the East, as in Europe, but cover their floors with carpets, and they put off their shoes that they might not soil those beautiful pieces of furniture: another reason is, that

as they sit cross-legged on the floor, and have no hinder quarters to their shoes, it would be troublesome to keep them upon their feet.

The Eastern people, very universally, make use of a staff when they journey on foot.—*Chardin.*

Here we see the Israelites were prepared for starting at a moment's warning.—*Harmer.*

NO. 54.—ROUTE OF THE ISRAELITES TO CANAAN.

xiii. 18. *God led the people about through the way of the Wilderness of the Red Sea: and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt.*

Dr. Shaw says, that there are two roads from Egypt to Canaan; one through the vallies of Jendilly, Rumeleah, and Baideah, bounded on each side by the mountains of the lower Thebais; the other, a higher road, having the northern range of the mountains of Mocatee, running parallel with it on the right hand, and the desert of Egyptian Arabia, which lies open to the land of the Philistines, to the left.

Thevenot informs us, that he has travelled in twelve days from Cairo to Gaza by the land of the Philistines; and it appears from various statements, that it is but fourteen days' journey from Cairo to Jerusalem. The way of the desert was not impracticable; for Joseph had tried it before them with a great company.

Mr. Harmer supposes, that their being *harnessed* must have an allusion to the beasts which carried their provisions and other necessaries; that they were fastened to each other, and not that the Israelites were harnessed.

Dr. Clarke says, “our margin has it, *by five in a rank*; but if they marched only five abreast, supposing only one yard for each rank to move in, it would have required not less than sixty-eight miles, for only the six hundred thousand men. Six hundred thousand divided by five, gives one hundred and twenty thousand ranks of five each; and there being only one thousand seven hundred and sixty yards in a mile, the dividing one hundred and twenty thousand by seventeen hundred and sixty, will give the number of miles such a column of people would take up.” The Doctor supposes, that it refers to the orderly manner in which the Israelites commenced their journey.

NO. 55.—THE ISRAELITES’ PASSAGE THROUGH THE SEA.
xiv. 29. *The waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left.*

Diodorus Siculus relates, that the Ichthyophagi, who lived near the Red Sea, had a tradition handed down to them through a long line of ancestors, that the whole bay was once laid bare to the very bottom, the waters retiring to the opposite shore; and that they afterwards returned to their accustomed channel with the most tremendous revulsion. Shaw informs us, that the inhabitants of the neighbourhood of Corondel preserve the remembrance of a mighty army having been once drowned in the bay, which Ptolemy calls Clysmæ. Niebuhr informs us, that the country where the event is said to have happened, in some degree bears testimony to the accuracy of the Mosaiical narrative. The scriptural Etham is still called Etti; the wilderness of Shur, the mountain of Sinai,

and the country of Paran, are still known by the same names. According to Bryant's information, Marah, Elath, and Midian, are still familiar to the ears of the Arabs. The grove of Elim, mentioned Exodus xv. 27. yet remains, and its twelve fountains have neither increased nor diminished in number since the days of Moses.—*Burder.*

NO. 56.—ANCIENT EASTERN DANCES.

xv. 20. *And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand : and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances.*

Representations similar to this are frequently to be met with in the ancient writers. Hesiod describes the muses as dancing round the altar of Jupiter. Lucian informs us, that the Indians adored the sun when they rose in the morning ; not as the Greeks did by kissing their hand, but by turning to the East and dancing ; and thus appeased the Deity, morning and evening.

It appears, that the dances of the Easterns, like their songs, are extemporaneous. Lady W. Montague informs us, that one leads the dance, and is followed by a troop of females, who imitate her steps, and if she sings make up the chorus. Those times are gay and lively, mixed with something soft and soothing. The steps are varied according to the pleasure of her that leads the dance, but always in exact time, and infinitely more agreeable than any of our dances.

Baron de Tott says, that on his passing a camp of the Asiatics, several of the Turcomen advanced to meet them, and the musicians of the different hordes

played and danced before them. Thus, when Saul and David returned from the slaughter of Goliah, *the women came out of all the cities of Israel singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of music.*—1 Sam. xviii. 6.

Harmer.

NO. 57.—THE ROCK OF MERIBAH.

xvii. 6. *Thou shall smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it.*

Dr. Shaw says, “after we had descended, with no small difficulty, the western side of Mount Sinai, we came into the other plain that is formed by it, which is called *Rephidim*. Here we still see that extraordinary piece of antiquity, the rock of Meribah, which hath continued down to this day without the least injury from time or accident. It is a block of granite marble, about six yards square, tottering, as it were, and loose, in the midst of the valley, and seems to have formerly belonged to Mount Sinai, which hangs in a variety of precipices all over this plain. *The waters, which gushed out of the stream which flowed,* have hollowed across one corner of this rock a channel, about two inches deep and twenty wide, appearing to be encrusted all over like the inside of a tea kettle that had been long in use.* We see all over this channel a great number of holes; some of them four or five inches deep, and one or two in diameter,—the lively and demonstrative tokens of their having been formerly so many fountains. Art or chance could by no means be concerned in the contrivance, for every circumstance points out to us a miracle; and, in the same manner with the rent in

* Psalm lxxviii. 20.

the rock of Mount Calvary, never fails to produce a religious surprize in all who see it."

This remarkable interposition of God has been incorporated with heathen fables. Euripides manifestly alludes to it where he makes one smite the rock at Cithæron, and waters gush out of it. Huetius thinks it probable, that the fable of Janus was forged from hence, where the image is described as holding a rod in his left hand, with which he smites a stone, and causes water to flow from it.—*Burder.*

NO. 58.—PUNISHMENT OF DEATH BY STONING.

xix. 13.—*He shall surely be stoned.*

To be stoned to death was a grievous and terrible infliction. When the offender came within four cubits of the place of execution, he was stripped naked, only leaving a covering before ; and his hands being bound, he was led up to the fatal place, which was an eminence twice a man's height. The first executioners of the sentence were the witnesses, who generally pulled off their clothes for the purpose : one of them threw him down with great violence upon his back ; and if he rolled upon his breast, he was turned upon his back again. If the fall did not occasion immediate death, the other witness took a great stone, and dashed upon his breast, as he lay upon his back ; and then, if not dispatched, all the people that stood by threw stones at him till he died. Sometimes they would throw the culprit down upon a great stone ; and at other times would let a stone fall upon him ; to which our Lord alludes in Luke xx. 18. *Whosoever shall fall upon this stone shall be broken : but on whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder.*—*Lewis.*

NO. 59.—EASTERN VINEYARDS.

xxii. 5. If a man shall cause a field or a vineyard to be eaten; of the best of his own field, and of the best of his own vineyard, shall he make restitution.

According to Dr. Richard Chandler's observations in the Lesser Asia, it appears, that their tame cattle are fond of vine leaves, and are permitted to eat them in the autumn; that is, to browze after the vintage. Horace supposes, that the flesh of goats fed upon vines was the most delicious of any of that kind of food.

The vine-fed goats not always luscious fare.

FRANCIS.

Since camels and goats are so fond of the leaves of the vine, the turning them into a vineyard before the fruit was gathered must have occasioned much mischief; and their being turned in afterward would have been eating another's food. Chardin speaks of vines in Persia, so large, that he could hardly compass the trunks with his arms. This pours light upon Gen. xlix. 11. and shews us, that the ass might be securely bound to the vine, without danger of damaging the tree by browsing on it.—*Harmer.*

NO. 60.—EASTERS BURN THEIR DRY HERBAGE.

xxii. 6. If fire break out, and catch in thorns, so that the stacks of corn, or the standing corn, or the field be consumed therewith; he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution.

Dr. Chandler informs us, that in the East they set their dry herbage on fire before the descent of the autumnal rains; which fires, for want of care, often do great damage. He says, that at a certain time dining with his companions under a spreading tree,

a Turk going to them emptied the ashes from his pipe, and a spark of fire fell, unobserved, in the grass, which was long, parched, and inflammable like tinder; a brisk wind kindled a blaze, which quickly withered the leaves of the bushes and trees, and devoured all before it with a prodigious crackling and noise. The Turks with their sabres cut down boughs and buffeted the flames, which were at length subdued. The struggle lasted about an hour; and a considerable tract of ground was laid waste. From these things we see the propriety of a law, which made those liable to make all damages good who, either maliciously or by great negligence, occasioned those fires. Two instances are mentioned in scripture in which the standing corn was set on fire and destroyed.—Judges xv. 15. 2 Sam. xiv. 30.—

Harmer.

NO. 61.—HEATHEN SUPERSTITION.

xxiii. 19. *Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk.*

Cudworth informs us, that it was a custom of the ancient heathens, when they had gathered in all their fruit, to take a kid, and boil it in the dam's milk; and then, in a magical way, to go about and besprinkle it over all their trees, fields, gardens, and orchards; thinking by this means they should make them fructify, and bring forth fruit more abundantly the following year. He thinks the prohibition in the text was to guard the Jews, at the time of their in-gathering, against this senseless superstition.

The simple object of the passage seems to be, “Thou shalt do nothing that may have any tendency to blunt

thy moral feelings," Even human nature shudders at the thought of causing the mother to lend her milk to seethe the flesh of her young one! We need go no farther for the delicate, tender, humane, and impressive meaning of this precept.—*Clarke.*

NO. 62.—THE WAVE OFFERING.

xxix. 24. And shalt wave them for a wave offering before the Lord.

Waving the sacrifice before the Lord is a very ancient sacrificial rite. It was of two kinds: one was performed by waving it perpendicularly, upward and downward; the other by waving it horizontally, towards the four cardinal points, to denote the consecration of what was thus waved to the Lord of the whole earth; and the extent of that true and great sacrifice, represented in these types, to all.—*Jennings.*

NO. 63.—EGYPTIAN IDOLATRY.

xxxii. 6. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt-offerings, and brought peace-offerings: and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

Herodotus gives us an account of a solemn feast, which the people of Egypt celebrated at Bubastis, in honour of the goddess Diana. He says, they offer many sacrifices to this idol, and while the victims are burning they dance, and play a hundred tricks, and drink more wine than in the whole year besides. It appears, that on these occasions they generally convene about seven hundred thousand men and women, besides children. Aaron's feast of the golden calf appears to have been in imitation of this; and it

is probable that at this feast they sacrificed after the manner of the Egyptians.—*Burder.*

Rollin thinks, that the golden calf was set up in imitation of the God Apis. The Egyptians, not contented with offering incense to animals, carried their folly to such an excess as to ascribe a divinity to the pulse and roots of their gardens. For this they are ingeniously reproached by the satirist.—

Who has not heard where Egypt's realms are nam'd,
 What monster gods her frantic sons have fram'd?
 Here Ibis gorg'd with well-grown serpents, there
 The crocodile commands religio's fear :
 A monkey-god, prodigious to be told !
 Strikes the beholder's eye with burnish'd gold :
 Through towns Diana's power neglected lies,
 Where to her dogs aspiring temples rise :
 And should you leeks or onions eat, no time
 Would expiate the sacrilegious crime.
 Religious nations sure, and blest abodes,
 Where every orchard is o'er-run with gods.

ROLLIN.

NO. 64.—ANCIENT LOOKING-GLASSES.

xxxviii. 8. *He made the laver of brass, of the looking-glasses of the women.*

The Eastern mirrors were generally made of polished steel, and for the most part convex. If they were thus made in the country of Elihu, the image made use of by him, Job xxxvii. 18. will appear very lively. *Hast thou with him spread out the sky, which is strong, and as a molten looking-glass ?* Shaw informs us, that in the Levant looking-glasses are a part of female dress. “The Moorish women in Barbary are so fond of their ornaments, and particularly of the looking-glasses, which they hang upon their breast, that they will not

lay them aside even when, after the drudgery of the day, they are obliged to go two or three miles, with a pitcher or a goat's skin, to fetch water." It appears, that the Israelitish women used to carry their mirrors with them even to their most solemn places of worship; which some have supposed they learned from the Egyptian women, who used to go to the temple with a looking-glass in one hand, and a timbrel in the other. To speak of looking-glasses made of steel, and *glasses molten*, is palpably absurd; but the term *mirror* obviates every difficulty, and expresses the true meaning of the original.—*Burder*.

The first mirrors, known among men, were the clear still fountain, and unruffled lake. The first artificial ones were, apparently, made of brass; afterward of polished steel; and when luxury increased they were made of silver: but, according to Pliny the most esteemed were those made of tin.—*Clarke*.

LEVITICUS.

NO 65.—THE MEAT OFFERING.

ii. 1. *When any will offer a meat-offering unto the Lord, his offering shall be of fine flour.*

Flour, of the finest sort, formed a part of the sacrificial offerings, not only of the Jews, but of the Greeks likewise. Thus Homer represents Eumeus as acting—

—— then on the board display'd
The ready meal before Ulysses laid,
With flour imbrown'd ——

'This flour, says Dacier, was made of parched corn. When the ancients offered any thing that had no

been offered in sacrifice they sprinkled it with flour, which was used instead of the hallowed barley with which they consecrated their victims. Since some honours were paid to the gods in all their feasts, this sprinkling of the flour by Eumæus was a religious act. Flour was sometimes used by the Greeks as a substitute for animals in their hecatombs: they invented a method of imposing upon the gods by offering one animal only, and for the remainder substituting little images of paste.—*Burder.*

NO. 66.—MANNER OF BAKING BREAD.

ii. 5. *A meat-offering baken in a pan.*

Shaw says, the Arabs knead the dough for their unleavened cakes in the same small wooden bowls in which they serve up their provisions.—Gen. xiii. 34.

Rauwolff informs us, that travellers in the desert of Arabia frequently bake their bread on the ground, heated by the fire for that purpose, and cover their cakes with ashes and coals; but that some of the Arabians had stones or copper-plates in their tents, made on purpose for baking. It appears that the Jews had private ovens for their families. Hence we read, *Ten women* shall bake your bread in one oven.*—Chap. xxvi. 26.

Darvieux says, that the Arabs about Mount Carmel sometimes bake in an oven, as well as on the hearth; and that they have another method of baking, which is, to make fire in a great stone pitcher, and apply a paste of meal and water with the hollow of the hand to the outside of the pitcher: the bread is thus baked in an instant, and comes off as thin as a wafer.

*Many Families.

Dr. Shaw tells us, that in the cities and villages of Barbary, there are public ovens; but that among the Bedouens and the Kabyles* their bread is baked upon the coals, or in a ta-jen, a shallow earthen vessel like a frying-pan. Mr. Harmer thinks, that the Arab stone pitcher, the ta-jen, and the iron-hearth, appear to answer the description Moses gives us of the different ways of preparing the meat-offerings.

Pitts assures us that, at Algiers, where they have public bake-houses, the women prepare the dough at home, and the bakers send their boys about the streets to give notice of their being ready, and to take the bread to the bake-house. On the signal being given, the women within knock at the door, and the boy advancing, the women open the door a little, and, hiding their faces, deliver the bread; which, when baked, is returned after a similar manner. They give the boy a piece of bread for the baking, which is the master's recompence.—*Harmer.*

NO. 67.—SALT USED IN OFFERINGS.

ii. 13. *With all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt.*

Among the ancients salt was the emblem of sincerity, friendship, and fidelity; and hence it was used in all their sacrifices and covenants. Bruce mentions a kind of salt so hard, that it is used as money, and passes from hand to hand, no more injured than a stone. A covenant of salt seems to refer to the making of an agreement, wherein salt was used as a token of confirmation.

Baron de Tott, speaking of one who was desirous of his acquaintance, says, that upon his departure he

*The Bedouens are such as live in tents. The Kabyles are those who live in miserable hovels in the mountains.

promised shortly to return ; and adds, “ I had already attended him half way down the stair-case, when stopping, and turning briskly to one of my domestics, ‘ bring me directly,’ said he, ‘ some bread and salt.’ What he requested was brought ; when taking a little salt between his fingers, and putting it with a mysterious air on a bit of bread, he ate it with a devout gravity, assuring me that I might now rely on him.” Pliny says, that there was no sacrifice offered to the gods without the salted cake ; which appears plain also from the language of Homer :—

Then near the altar of the darting King,
Dispos'd in rank, their hecatomb they bring ;
With water purify their hands, and take
The sacred off'ring of the salted cake. IL.

D'Herbelot says that, among other exploits which are recorded of *Jacoub ben Laith*, he is said to have broken into a palace, and having collected a very large booty, which he was on the point of carrying away, he stumbled over something, which he put to his mouth, the better to distinguish it ; and finding it to be a lump of salt, which was considered as a symbol and pledge of hospitality, he was so touched as to abandon his booty and desert the palace.

Burder.

Thus the Lord gave the kingdom of Israel to David by a covenant of salt.—2 Chron. xiii. 5.

NO. 68.—THE PERPETUAL FIRE.

vi. 13. *The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar : it shall never go out.*

This rite was imitated by the Gentiles, who thought it ominous to have their sacred fire go out ; and

therefore appointed persons to watch and keep it perpetually burning. The great business of the vestal virgins at Rome was to look after what was called the eternal fire; imagining that its extinction purported the destruction of the city. It appears, that the Greeks also preserved a constant fire at Delphi. The Persians also took great care to preserve their fire alive. Q. Curtius, giving an account of the march of Darius's army, says, the fire, which they called eternal, was carried before them on silver altars; the Magi came after it, singing hymns after the Persian manner; and three hundred and sixty-five youths, clothed in scarlet, followed, according to the number of the days in the year.

Sir W. Jones informs us, in his discourse on the Persians, that the *Sagnicas*, when they enter on their sacerdotal office, kindle, with two pieces of the hard wood semi, a fire, which they keep lighted through their lives, for their nuptial ceremony, the performance of solemn sacrifices, the obsequies of departed ancestors, and their own funeral pile.—*Burder.*

NO. 69.—SKINS OF SACRIFICES THE PORTION OF THE
PRIESTS.

vii. 8. *The Priest shall have to himself the skin of the burnt offering which he hath offered.*

Bishop Patrick says, it is probable that Adam himself offered the first sacrifice, and had the skin given him by God, to make garments for himself and his wife. In conformity to which the Priests ever after had the skin of the whole burnt offerings for their portion. This was a custom among the Gentiles as well as the Jews, who gave the skins of

their sacrifices to their Priests ; by whom they were employed to a superstitious use, by lying upon them in their temples, hoping to have future things revealed to them in their dreams. Of this we have a proof in Virgil :—

First on the fleeces of the slaughtered sheep
By night the sacred Priest dissolves in sleep :
When, in a train, before his slumb'ring eye,
Thin, airy forms, and wondrous visions fly.
He calls the pow'rs who guard th' infernal floods,
And talks inspired familiarly with gods.

Pitt.

The Highlanders of Scotland, like all rude people, had various superstitious modes of enquiring into futurity. One of the most noted was the *togham*. A person was wrapped up in the skin of a newly slain bullock, and deposited beside a water-fall, or at the bottom of a precipice, or in some other strange, wild, and unusual situation, where the scenery around him suggested nothing but objects of horror. In this situation he revolved in his mind the question proposed ; and whatever was impressed upon him by his exalted imagination, passed for the inspiration of the disembodied spirits who haunt these desolate recesses.—*Burder &c.*

NO. 70.—MANNER OF CASTING LOTS.

xvi. 8. *And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat.*

The manner in which these lots were cast does not appear in scripture ; but if we may credit the Rabbies, there was an urn brought to the High Priest, into which he threw two wooden lots ; on one of

which was written—*for the Lord*; and on the other—*for the scape-goat*. After he had shaken them, he put both his hands into the urn and brought up the lots, one in each hand ; and as the goats stood, one on each side of him, their fate was determined by the lot that came up in the hand next to them: if the right hand brought up the lot—*for the Lord*, they regarded it as a good omen; but if the left hand brought it up, they accounted it as a bad omen, and an indication that God was not satisfied.—Jennings.

NO. 71.—THE SCAPE GOAT.

xvi. 22. *And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities, unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.*

Mr. Bruce relates the following narrative:—“We found that, upon some dissention, the garrison and townsmen had been fighting for several days, in which disorders the greatest part of the ammunition in the town had been expended; but it had since been agreed on, by the old men of both parties, that nobody had been to blame on either side, but the whole wrong was the work of a camel. A camel, therefore, was seized and brought without the town; and there, a number on both sides having met, they upbraided the camel with every thing that had been either said or done. The camel had killed men; he had threatened to set the town on fire; the camel had threatened to burn the Aga’s house and the castle; he had cursed the Grand Seignior and the Sheriff of Mecca, the Sovereigns of the two parties, and threatened to destroy the wheat that was going to Mecca. After having spent a great part of the afternoon in

upbraiding the camel, whose measure of iniquity, it seems, was nearly full, each man thrust him through with a lance, and then retired, fully satisfied as to the wrongs he had received from the camel."

The Asuamedha Jug is an ancient Indian custom, in which an horse was brought and sacrificed, with some rites similar to those prescribed in the Mosaic law. The horse thus sacrificed was instead of the sacrificer, and bore his sins with him into the wilderness in which he was turned adrift ; and thus, without shedding of blood, the animal became an expiatory victim.—*Burder.*

NO. 72.—THE FEAST OF FIRE.

xviii. 21. *Thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Moloch.*

As fire was employed in the worship of Moloch, this idol has been supposed to represent the sun. According to Rabbi Simeon, all the idolatrous temples were in the city of Jerusalem, except that of Moloch, which was out of the city, in a separate place. This idol was a statue, having the head of an ox, with hands stretched out, as if to receive something to its embraces. There were seven chapels erected, in the front of which stood this idol. He that offered a fowl, or a young pigeon, went into the first chapel ; if he offered a sheep, or a lamb, he went into the second ; if a ram, into the third ; if a calf, into the fourth ; if a bullock, into the fifth ; if an ox, into the sixth ; but he only who offered his own son went into the seventh chapel, and kissed the idol Moloch.* The child was placed before the idol, which was hollow,

*Hos. xiii. 2.

and a fire was made under it 'till it was red-hot ; then the Priest took the child, and put him into the hands of Moloch, whilst drums were beating to drown the cries of the sufferer. Some say, that the image received the child in its arms, and dropped it into the fire beneath.

Sonnerat gives us an astonishing instance of the superstition of the ancient Indians, in respect to this venerated fire. He says, that in the grand annual festival held in honor of Darma-Rajah, and called the feast of fire, the devotees, as in the ancient rites of Moloch, walk barefoot over a glowing fire, extending forty feet.

This feast lasts eighteen days, during which time they fast, lie on the bare ground, and walk on a brisk fire. On the eighteenth day, at the sound of certain instruments, their heads are crowned with flowers, and their bodies bedaubed with saffron, and they follow the figures of Darma-Rajah and of Drobeye his wife, who are carried there in procession. When they come to the fire they stir it, to animate its activity, and rub their foreheads with the ashes. When the gods have been three times round it, they walk either fast or slow, according to their zeal, over this element of fire. Some carry their children in their arms ; others carry lances, sabres, and standards. The most fervent devotees will walk several times over this fire. After the ceremony, the people press to collect some of the ashes, to rub their foreheads, and obtain some of the flowers with which the devotees were adorned, and which they carefully preserve.

It appears, that this custom overspread all nations, the Greeks themselves not excepted. Ahaz is said to

have burnt his children in the fire—2 Chron. xxviii. 3; but he could not have destroyed them all, because Hezekiah was his successor. Some of his children passed safely over the fire, whilst others were burnt to death in it. As this was done according to the abomination of the heathen, it was, no doubt, in honor of Moloch.—*Burder.*

NO. 73.—THE MANNER OF CUTTING HAIR.

xix. 27. *Ye shall not round the corners of your heads.*

It appears, that the Hebrew word translated *corners* signifies also the *extremities* of any thing; and the meaning is, they were not to cut their hair equal behind and before, as did the worshippers of the stars and the planets, particularly the Arabians.

According to Herodotus, they do it in honour of Bacchus, who they say had his hair cut in this way: and after this sort the Chinese cut their hair to the present day; which, no doubt, was a custom with the Egyptians when the Israelites dwelt among them.

Some, however, are led to imagine, that it refers to a superstitious custom among the Gentiles in their mourning for the dead. They cut off their hair, and that round about, and threw it into the sepulchre with the bodies of their relations and friends, and sometimes laid it upon the face or the breast of the dead, as an offering to the infernal gods, whereby they thought to appease them, and make them kind to the deceased. Here we see the grand cause of the prohibition.

NO. 74.—PRIESTS EXEMPT FROM WAR.

i. 49. *Thou shalt not number the tribe of Levi.*

FROM this example the heathen learned to exempt all those who ministered to their gods from all other services, especially from war. Strabo notes this custom to have been as old as Homer's time; for in all his catalogue there is no mention of any ship that went against Troy from Alalcomenon, because that city was sacred to Minerva. Cæsar also observes, that the ancient Druids were exempt from war and from tribute.—*Burder.*

NO. 75.—THE SHAVING OF THE NAZARITE.

vi. 18. *And the Nazarite shall shave the head of his separation at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, &c.*

The Egyptians used to let their hair grow, in honour of their gods, particularly of Apollo, Bacchus, and Minerva. This superstitious practice grew to such a height, that we find they consecrated it to rivers, in which they thought there was some divinity.

Achilles, at the funeral of Patroclus, cut off his golden locks, which his father had dedicated to the river-god *Sperchins*, and threw them into the flood.

But great Achilles stands apart in pray'r,
And from his head divides the yellow hair ;
Those curling locks which from his youth he vow'd,
And sacred grew to Sperchins' honor'd flood.
Then sighing, to the deep his locks he cast,
And roll'd his eyes around the watry waste.

HOMER.

In other instances they cut it off, and hung it upon trees, or laid it up in their temples, there to be preserved. At Athens there was a certain day appointed

on one of their feasts, at which the hair of their children was cut off, and sacrificed to Diana. Lucian represents this as a very common custom, and it appears that he himself complied with it. Suetonius relates an instance of it in his life of Nero ; informing us, that he cut off his beard, put it into a golden box set with jewels, and consecrated it to Jupiter Capitolineus.

Some writers have asserted, that the laws of the Hebrew Nazarites were given to prevent an idolatrous adoption of Egyptian customs : but it is possible that those usages may be posterior to the time of Moses, and that they are borrowed from his institutions.

Burder.

The hair of the Nazarite was permitted to grow, as a token of his separation to God ; and at the close of his Nazariteship it was publicly sacrificed unto the Lord, that it might be known that his vow was ended. *Acts xxi. 24.*

NO. 76.—THE IMPORTANCE OF A GUIDE IN THE EAST.

x. 31. *Thou mayest be to us instead of eyes,*

Eastern guides are men of great consideration, knowing perfectly the situation and properties of all kinds of water to be met with on the route ; the distances of wells ; whether occupied by enemies or not, and, if so, the way to avoid them with the least inconvenience. It is also necessary to them to know the places occupied by the simoom, and the seasons of their blowing in those parts of the desert : likewise those occupied by moving sands. The guide generally belongs to some powerful tribe of Arabs inhabiting those deserts, whose aid he solicits, to pro-

teet his caravans in time of danger, and he has always handsome rewards in his power to distribute on such occasions.—*Bruce.*

But what need had the Israelites of a guide, when they had the pillar of fire continually to point out the way? Answer.—The cloud directed their general journies, but not their particular excursions. Parties took several journies while the grand army lay still. They therefore needed such a person as Hobab, who was well acquainted with the desart, to point out watering-places, and places where they might meet with fuel, &c.—*Clarke.*

NO. 77.—DIFFERENT HERBS USED IN EGYPT.

xi. 5. *We remember the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick.*

Cucumbers are well known to be of a very cooling and refreshing property in hot weather.

Maillet assures us, that all the various species of *melons* which grow in Europe and in the sea-ports of the Mediterranean are to be found in Egypt; besides which there is one of a round figure, whose substance is green and very delicious. Dr. Shaw says, that the water melon affords a cool refreshing juice, which assuages thirst and mitigates feverish disorders. It is eaten in abundance by the Egyptians of every rank; and purchased as of the greatest use to travellers in thirsty deserts.

Mr. Harmer thinks, that the word translated *leeks*, means *succory*, or *endive*, which are supposed to be plants of a cooling nature. Maillet says, that the *onions* of Egypt are sweeter than in any other place in the world; and there is such an abundance of

them in Egypt that at Cairo an hundred pounds weight may be purchased for eight or ten sols.* Hasselquist says, that the Egyptians sometimes eat their onions roasted, cut into four pieces, with some bits of roasted meat, which the Turks in Egypt call Kabab; and with this dish, he says, they are so delighted, that they wish they might enjoy it in Paradise. At other times they cut the onions in small pieces and make a soup of them.

As for garlick, it appears that the modern Arabs use it as a preservative against the deadly quality of their hot winds. Dr. Hasselquist says, that the garlick which is used in Egypt, is imported from the Islands of the Archipelago. When the Israelites had in heart, forsaken the Lord, it is no wonder that they murmured and pined for those things in the burning desert, on their way to the promised land.—

Harmer.

NO. 78.—QUAILS GIVEN TO THE ISRAELITES.

xi. 31. 32. *And there went forth a wind from the Lord, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, &c.*

Several learned Bishops have supposed, that they were locusts, and not *quails*, which the children of Israel ate in the wilderness: but Josephus and Dr. Shaw argue the contrary. Maillet says, that on a little island, which covers one of the ports of Alexandria, the birds annually alight, which come hither for refuge from the severity of European winters. They take such quantities of quails and other birds on this island, that, after stripping them of their feathers,

* A sol is worth about an half-penny.

and burying them in the sand, they are worth but two sols per pound. Thus the Israelites spread their quails round about the camp, to dry them on the sands, and preserve them for use.

Josephus says, that *quails* are in greater numbers thereabout than any other kind of bird; and that having crossed the sea, to the camp of Israel, they, which in common fly nearer the ground than most other birds, flew so low, through the fatigue of their passage, as to be within reach of the Israelites. This explains what he thought was meant by the *two cubits from the face of the earth*—namely, their flying within three or four feet of the ground.

It appears, that these quails fell about a day's journey round about the camp. According to Bishop Patrick, a day's journey is about sixteen or twenty miles; but Dr. Shaw makes a day's journey but ten miles, which would make a circle of twenty miles diameter. These things shew us the finger of God. Their gathering so large a quantity as ten homers, must be considered as relating only to those sportsmen who pursued the game both day and night.—*Harmer.*

NO. 79.—SPITTING, A MARK OF DETESTATION.

xii. 14. *If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days.*

The association between spitting and shame is so great in the East, that we have but faint conceptions of it. Monsieur d'Arvieux assures us, that the Arabs never spit before their superiors. Chardin says, that spitting on the ground, in speaking of any one's actions, is through the East an expression of extreme detestation. Among the Jews it was prescribed by law as a

mark of disgrace—Deut. xxv. 9; and from our text it appears, that a father's dishonouring a daughter by *spitting in her face* was thought so disgraceful, as to lead to retirement from public view for at least a whole week.

Niebuhr informs us, that, travelling in a caravan, one of the company spitting sideways, happened to defile the beard of a Mahomedan, who was highly offended at it; but the offender instantly asked pardon, and kissed his beard, by which submission he was appeased.

Hanway says, than in 1744, when a rebel prisoner was brought before Nadir Shah's General, the soldiers were ordered to spit in his face, which is an indignity of great antiquity in the East. This expression of reproach was offered to our Lord in his humiliation.—Matt. xxvi. 67.

NO. 80.—BALAK'S WISH TO CURSE ISRAEL.

xxii. 6. *Come now, therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people.*

It appears that an opinion prevailed, both in those days and in after ages, that some men had a power, by the help of their gods, to devote not only particular persons, but whole armies to destruction. This they are said to have done, sometimes, by words of imprecation; of which there was a set form among some people, which Æschines calls *the determinate curse*. Sometimes they also offered sacrifices, and used certain rites and ceremonies with solemn charms. A famous instance of this we find in the life of Crassus, where Plutarch tells us, that Atticus, tribune of the people, made a fire at the gate, out at which Crassus was to

march to the war against the Parthians ; into which he threw certain things to make a fume, and offered sacrifices to the most angry gods, with horrid imprecations upon him : these, he says, according to ancient tradition, had such a power, that no man who was loaded with them could avoid being undone.—*Burder.*

Macrobius says, that the ancient form of incantation used by the Romans, to call over the protecting deities from Carthage to Rome, was as follows:—“ Whether it be god or goddess, under whose protection the people and city of Carthage are placed ; and thee, especially, who hast undertaken to defend this city and people, I pray, beseech, and earnestly intreat, that you would forsake the people and city of Carthage, and leave their places, temples, sacred things, and city, and depart from them ; and that you would inspire this people and city with fear, terror, and forgetfulness ; and that, coming out from them, you would pass over to Rome, to me and to mine, and that our places, temples sacred things, and city, may be more agreeable and more acceptable to you : and that you would preside over me, the Roman people, and my soldiers, that we may know and perceive it. If ye will do this, I promise to consecrate to your honor both temples and games.”

They had a second incantation, to devote the city to destruction which the tutelary gods had abandoned, and that their own armies and legions might be preserved in safety. In case of compliance, they engaged to sacrifice *three black sheep* “ to thee O mother Earth, and to thee O Jupiter.” When the execrator mentioned the *Earth* he stooped down, and placed both his hands upon it : when he named *Jupiter* he lifted up both his hands to Heaven : and when he mentioned his *vow*, he placed his hands upon his breast.—*Clarke.*

NO. 81.—BALAAM'S ALTARS AND SACRIFICES.

xxiii. 1. Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven oxen, and seven rams.

The number seven was highly regarded, and thought of great efficacy in religious actions, not only by the Jews, but by the heathens. Apuleius says, “desirous of purifying myself, I wash in the sea, and dip my head seven times in the waves, the divine Pythagoras having taught that this number is, above all others, most proper in the concerns of religion.” That the ancients were superstitious about certain numbers, supposing that God delighted in odd numbers, appears from Virgil:—

Around his waxen image first I win'd
Three woollen fillets, of three colors join'd ;
Thrice bind about his thrice devoted head,
Which round the sacred altar thrice is led.
Unequal numbers please the gods.

DRYDEN.

Numerous were the altars which were used by the heathen and by idolators.—*According to the number of the streets of Jerusalem, have ye set up altars to that shameful thing, even altars to burn incense unto Baal.*—Jer. xi. 13. But the true worshippers of the Lord confined themselves to one.—Gen. viii, 20. Exod. xvii. 15.

DEUTERONOMY.

NO. 82.—DESCRIPTION OF THE WALLS OF EASTERN CITIES.

i. 28. The cities are great and walled up to heaven.

It appears, that the Easterns were in the habit of raising their city walls to an amazing height, to prevent their being scaled by their enemies. Thevenot

informs us, that the great monastery at Mount Sinai is well built of good free-stone, with very high smooth walls: on the east side there is a window, by which those that are within draw up the pilgrims into the monastery in a basket, which they let down by a rope which runs in a pulley. These walls, he says, are so high that they cannot be scaled; and without cannon the place cannot be taken. The gate of this convent was kept walled up, and never opened except at the reception of a new Archbishop.

One method which they had of building their city walls was partly of stone and partly of wood: thus, the wall of Gaza was burnt with fire.—Amos, Chap. i. 6. The walls of Tyre and Rabbah appear to have been of a similar structure.—V. 10. 14. The walls of the old Russian cities were oftentimes wholly formed of huge beams of timber, laid one upon another, and firmly fastened together. Maillet gives us a similar account of the monastery of St. Anthony, in Egypt, the walls of which are so high as effectually to secure it from the insults of the Arabs. Thus it was anciently, when the spies discouraged the hearts of the people by telling them, in the strong Eastern mode of expression, that the walls were so high that they reached *up to Heaven*: but had it been literally so, yet the Israelites, in thinking them impregnable, must have forgotten the omnipotence of their divine leader.—Harmer.

NO. 83.—MANNER OF INculcating MORAL MAXIMS.

vi. 9. *Thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.*

Among the Chinese, moral maxims are inculcated by the aged on the younger branches of the family:

and plain sentences of morality are hung up in the common hall, where the male branches of the family assemble. This appears to be the same method as was practised by the ancient Hebrews in the time of Moses.

Leo, of Modena, says, that in his time the Jews continued this practise, writing certain passages of scripture upon parchment, which they rolled up, and inscribed with the name of Shaddai. This they put into a piece of cane, or other hollow wood, and fastened to the doors of their houses and of every room in them; and, as often as they went in and out, they made it a point of their devotion to touch this parchment, and to kiss it. According to Huetius, other nations used to write their laws upon their gates.

Burder.

NO. 84.—JUDEA INFESTED WITH WILD BEASTS.

vii. 22. *Thou mayst not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee.*

Mr. Haynes informs us, that, on his approaching Cana of Galilee, at the close of the day, he found it to be both terrifying and dangerous. The surrounding country, he says, swarms with *wild beasts*; such as tygers, leopards, jackals, &c. whose cries and howlings are calculated to strike the traveller with the deepest sense of horror. He says, that, on visiting Mount Tabor, he crept into several holes and subterraneous caverns among the ruins, until his guide advised him to be more cautious, assuring him that tygers frequently resorted to those places in the day time, to shelter themselves from the sun, and he might pay dear for his curiosity.

Our text supposes, that, should Judea be thinly peopled, the wild beasts might so multiply, as to render it dangerous to its inhabitants. The Prophet Ezekiel supposes the same, in a passage in which he describes the mercy granted to the land of Israel, after its being re-peopled, when the Lord should turn again the captivity of Zion. *I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land, and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods.*—Ezek. xxxiv. 25.

Harmer.

NO. 85.—THE FERTILITY OF JUDEA.

viii. 8. *A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil-olive, and honey.*

Dr. Shaw says, “it is impossible for pulse, wheat, or grain of any kind, to be richer or better tasted than what is commonly used at Jerusalem.” The *wines* of Lebanon, Hermon, and Carmel are said, for smell, taste, and usefulness, to exceed all others. Hasselquist says, that the *fig-trees* in the neighbourhood of Joppa were as beautiful as any he had seen in the Levant.

Russell informs us, that there are three sorts of *pomegranates* at Aleppo; the sour, the sweet, and one between the both. They give a grateful acidity to their sauces by pomegranate or lemon juice. The pomegranate is more easily preserved through the winter; and in cookery is often preferred to lemon.

Hasselquist says, that he ate *olives* at Joppa, which, professedly, grew on the Mount of Olives, near Jerusalem; and that, independent of their oiliness, they

were the best he had tasted in the Levant. He says, in prosecuting his journey he found several fine vales, abounding with olive-trees. He saw olive-trees also in Galilee; but none farther than the mountain where our Lord is supposed to have preached his sermon.

Honey, it appears, was plentiful in the land of promise. Hasselquist says, that prosecuting his journey from Acre to Nazareth, he found great numbers of bees bred there, to the great advantage of the inhabitants. He says, that their bee-hives are made of clay, four feet long, and half a foot in diameter, as in Egypt: they lay ten or twelve of them one upon another, on the bare ground, and then build over them a little roof. By Israel's sucking *honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock*,* we may understand their enjoying great quantities of honey produced by bees, which collected it from flowers growing among the rocks; and that they had oil produced in abundance by olive trees growing on flinty rocks.—

Harmer.

NO. 86.—WATER ENGINES WROUGHT BY THE FEET.

xi. 10. *The land whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot.*

The custom of watering with the foot is thus explained by Dr. Shaw:—It is common for the Egyptians to plant their melons, sugar canes, &c. in rills; and, on their wanting refreshment, they strike the plugs out of the cisterns in which they preserve the water of the Nile; and, on the waters gushing out, it is con-

* Deut. xxxii. 13;

ducted from one rill to another by the gardener, who is always ready to stop and divert the torrent, by turning the earth against it with his foot, and opening at the same time, with his mattock, a new trench to receive it. This method of conveying moisture and nourishment to a land very rarely refreshed with rain, is often alluded to in the holy scriptures, and made the distinguishing quality between Egypt and the land of Canaan.

Mr. Parkhurst is of opinion, that *watering with the foot* is rather an allusion to drawing up water with a machine which was worked by the foot. Such a machine, according to Grotius, was described by Philo, who lived in Egypt; and said to be used, by the peasants of the country in his time.

Mr. Harmer thinks, that Moses intended to represent the great labour of this way of watering *by the foot*: in consequence of which it seems to have been laid aside in Egypt since the time of Philo, and easier methods of raising the water introduced. Strabo speaks of an engine which, by wheels and pulleys, threw up the water of the Nile to the top of a very high hill; but no less than one hundred and fifty slaves were employed to turn the wheels.

NO. 87.—IDOLATROUS CUTTING IN RELIGIOUS WORSHIP.

xiv. 1. *Ye are the children of the Lord your God: ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead.*

According to d'Arvieux, the Arabs oftentimes scar their arms by the gashes of a knife, to convince their mistresses of the violence and rigour of their love.

O, lovely charmer, pity me,
See how my blood does from me fly !
Yet, were I sure to conquer thee,
Witness it, Heav'n ! I'd gladly die.

In holy writ we often read of people *cutting* themselves when in great anguish ; but we are not commonly told what part they wounded. It appears indeed from Jeremiah, that the ancients wounded themselves somewhat similar to the modern Arabs. *Every head shall be bald and every beard clipt : upon all hands shall be cuttings, and upon the loins sackcloth.*—Chap. xlviij. 37.

The cuttings of the Old Testament generally refer to the greatest calamities. The lunatic of the New Testament, who cut himself, might possibly do it from the same principle with the modern Arabs. The Priests of Baal adopted the same method to excite the pity of the Sidonian idol, as the modern Arabs to move the compassion of an unyielding female.

Plutarch says, that the Priests of Bellona, when they sacrificed to that goddess, besmeared the victim with their own blood. They who carried about the Syrian goddess used to cut and slash themselves with knives, 'till the blood gushed out upon them.

Dr. Clarke informs us, that the Hindos often cut themselves with large instruments, that they may offer their blood to the goddess Cali ; and the larger the instrument with which the incision is made, the more meritorious they deem the offering. They often place a burning wick upon their flesh, in honor of the same deity ; and endeavour to appease her wrath by human sacrifices.

The ancient Druids of Britain, most of whose ceremonies were obviously of Eastern origin, used, at one

of their annual festivals, to commemorate, in the following manner, *the great deluge*. Round about certain lakes, in the midst of which they supposed the god of the flood had his dwelling, they marched, in a great and orderly multitude, clothed in garments of peculiar colour, with chaplets of flowers on their brows, singing and dancing, and *piercing their thighs* until the blood gushed out. One design of this ceremony was, to invite the god of the flood to visit the temples which had been dedicated to him.—

Myvyrian Archaiology of Wales.

The intention of Moses, in forbidding the Israelites to make such cuttings in their flesh, was doubtless to prevent such unworthy notions of the Deity he taught them to serve.—*Harmer.*

NO. 88.—PROHIBITION OF STRANGE CLOTHING.

xxii. 5. *The women shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment.*

This prohibitory law appears to be directed against an idolatrous usage as old as Moses; and which, later writers inform us, was to be found among several nations in after times, and attended with the most abominable practices. Plutarch informs us, that the Egyptians called the moon *the mother of the world*, and assigned to her a nature both male and female: and Boyse says of Diana or the moon, that the Egyptians worshipped this deity both as male and female,—the men sacrificing to it as Luna—the women as Lunus; and each sex on these occasions assumed the dress of the other.—*Burder.*

NO. 89.—ANCIENT METHOD OF GATHERING OLIVES.

xxiv. 20. *When thou bealest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.*

The sacred writings sometimes represent olives as beaten off the trees; and at other times as shaken. This may be considered as the difference between gathering the main crop by the owners, and the way in which the poor collected the few olive-berries that were left, and which, by the law of Moses, they were permitted to take.

The Abbot Fortis, in his account of Dalmatia, praises the inhabitants of a certain island for the management of their olives, in not suffering them to ferment before they express the oil. It appears, that in Naples, and in several other parts of Italy, they beat the branches with long poles to make the fruit fall. This custom, according to the Abbot, is very injurious to the plant.

However injurious the custom may be, of beating down the olives with long poles, it appears to be the ancient way of the owners gathering them, who probably left as few as possible on their trees, as they were forbidden by their law to brush them over a second time. Shaking them was sufficient when they had hung so much longer as to be fully ripe; and hence it was the method used by the poor, or strangers, to come at the olive-berries which were left. *As the shaking of an olive-tree, two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outermost fruitful branches thereof.*—Isa. xvii. 6.

Chandler says, that when the olive blackens, vast flights of doves, pigeons, thrushes, and other birds, repair to the olive groves for food.—Gen. viii. 11.—Harmer

NO. 90.—BASKETS MADE OF THE LEAVES OF THE PALM TREE.

xxviii. 5. *Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store.*

Hasselquist informs us, that the Eastern people use baskets in travelling; for, speaking of the species of the palm-tree which produces dates, and its great usefulness to the people of those countries, he tells us, that of the leaves of this tree they make baskets, or rather a kind of short bags, which are used in Turkey. As the *basket* was used to collect their fruits, the *blessing* of the basket may allude to the olive-gathering and vintage. The *store* signifies their leather bags, in which they used to carry things in travelling. Understood after this manner, the passage promises Israel success in their commerce, as the next verse promises them personal safety in their going out and in their return.—*Harmer and Clarke.*

NO. 91.—RAIN OF POWDER AND DUST.

xxviii. 24. *The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust.*

Sir T. Roe informs us, that in India the wind blows sometimes very high in hot and dry seasons, raising up clouds of dust and sand a very great height into the air. These dry showers, he says, most grievously annoy all those among whom they fall; smiting them with blindness; filling their eyes, ears, nostrils, and mouths too, if not well guarded; searching every place, as well within doors as without, so that there is not a little key-hole of any trunk or cabinet, if it be not covered, but receives some of the dust into it.

Tournefort says, “at Ghetsci there arose a tempest of sand, in the same manner as it happens sometimes

in Arabia and in Egypt ; especially in the spring. It was raised by a very hot south wind, which drove so much sand, that one of the gates of the Kervansery was half stopped up with it, and the way could not be found, being covered over about a foot deep, the sand lying in heaps on all hands." Herbert speaks to the same purpose : " and now the danger is past, let me tell you, most part of the last night we were crossing over an inhospitable sandy desart. The ground was covered with a loose flying sand, which, by the fury of the winter weather, is accumulated into such heaps, that upon any great wind the track is lost, and passengers, with their beasts, overwhelmed and stifled. Indeed in this place I thought that curse fulfilled, Deut. xxviii. 24. where the Lord by Moses threatens, instead of rain to give them showers of dust."

NO. 92.—DIVINE JUDGMENTS UPON A WICKED LAND.

xxix. 23. *The whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning.*

In those countries where *salt* abounds, its effect on vegetation is described by *burning*. Thus Volney, speaking of the borders of the Asphaltic Lake, or Dead Sea, says, "the true cause of the absence of vegetables and animals is the acrid saltiness of its waters, which is infinitely greater than that of the sea. The land surrounding the lake being equally impregnated with that saltiness, refuses to produce plants ; the air itself, which is by evaporation loaded with it, and which moreover receives vapours of sulphur and bitumen, cannot suit vegetation ; whence the dead appearance which reigns around the lake." Hence the ancient custom of sowing an enemy's city with

salt, in token of perpetual desolation.—Judges ix. 47. And thus in after times the city of Milan was burnt, razed, sown with salt, and ploughed, by the exasperated Emperor Frederick Barbarossa.—*Burder.*

NO. 93.—THE ISRAELITES WEEPING FOR MOSES.

xxxiv. 8. *And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days.*

It appears, that these were not the domestic lamentations which immediately succeeded the death of a friend, nor the mourning of a funeral at carrying the body to the grave, nor the mourning over the sepulchre of the dead; but a processional solemnity of mourning through the camp of Israel.

It was usual in the East to mourn for such persons as were absent from home when they died, and were buried at a distance from their relations. Irwin relates, that one of the inhabitants of Ghinnah being murdered in the desert, gave birth to a mournful procession of females, which passed through the different streets, and uttered dismal cries for his death. Josephus says, that it was a Jewish custom; and it appears that, upon taking Jotapata, and its being reported that Josephus was slain, the news occasioned great mourning at Jerusalem.

It was after this manner that the Israelites lamented the death of Moses. He was absent from them when he died, neither did they carry him to the grave; but they *wept for him in the plains of Moab.* The mourning for Aaron, who died in Mount Hor, might probably be of the same kind.—Num. xx. 25, 29.

Harmer.

NO 94.—CUSTOM OF LOOSING THE SHOE.

v. 15. *Loose thy shoe from off thy foot ; for the place whereon thou standest is holy.*

THE custom which is here referred to not only constantly prevailed over all the East, from the earliest ages, but continues to this day. To pull off the sandals or slippers is used as a mark of respect, on entering a mosque, or temple, or the room of any person of distinction ; in which case they are either laid aside or given to a servant to bear. Ives says, that as many slippers and sandals may be seen at the doors of an Indian Pagoda as there are hats hanging up in our churches. Maundrell, in describing the ceremonials of a Turkish visit, informs us, that, notwithstanding he was an European and a stranger, he was obliged to comply with this custom.—*Burder.*

NO. 95.—DUST UPON THE HEAD AN EXPRESSION OF GRIEF.

vii. 6. *And put dust upon their heads.*

Putting dust upon the head appears to have been an expression of great grief ; and, with this view, it was a very usual practice with the Jews. The Benjamite who bore the heart-rending intelligence of the discomfiture of the Israelites had *earth upon his head*.—1 Sam. iv. 12. This was imitated by the Gentiles, as in the case of the Ninevites.—Jonah, iii. 6. Homer describes Achilles lamenting the death of Patroclus by throwing dust upon his head, and lying down in it ; and speaking of Laertes he says,

Deep from his soul he sigh'd, and sorrowing spread
A cloud of ashes on his hoary head.

POPE.

Ropes have been carried upon the head, as a token of submission—I Kings, xx. 31; and according to Bruce, vanquished rebels have carried a stone upon their head, confessing themselves guilty of a capital crime.—*Burder.*

NO. 95.—DESCRIPTION OF ANCIENT WINE-BOTTLES.

ix. 4., *Wine-bottles, old, and rent, and bound up.*

Chardin informs us, that the Arabs, and all those that lead a wandering life, keep their water, milk, and other liquors, in *leathern bottles*. These bottles are made of goat-skins. When the animal is killed, they cut off its feet and head, and draw it out of the skin without opening its belly. They afterwards sew up the places where the legs and tail were cut off; and when filled they tie it about the neck. He says, the Arabians and country-people of Persia never go a journey without a small leathern bottle of water hanging by their side. The great leathern bottles are made of the skin of an he-goat; and the small ones, that serve instead of a bottle of water on the road, are made of a kid's skin. Chardin says, that they infuse rose-water into those bottles, when they are new, that the water may not taste of the leather. These bottles, when old, are frequently rent, but are capable of being repaired, by being bound up. This, according to Chardin, is done various ways; by setting in a piece, gathering up the wounded place in manner of a purse, or by putting in a round flat piece of wood to stop the hole.

Mr. Bruce gives us a description of the *girba*, which seems to be a vessel of a similar kind, but of much larger dimensions. A *girba* is an ox's skin, squared,

and the edges sewed together by a double seam, much resembling that of the best English cricket-balls, which effectually secures the water. An opening is left at the top of the girba, in the same manner as the hung-hole of a cask ; around this they gather up a large handful of the skin, which, when the girba is full of water, is tied round with whip-cord. These girbas generally contain about sixty gallons each, and two of them are a load for a camel. They are besmeared on the outside with grease, to hinder the water from oozing through, and to prevent its being evaporated by the heat of the sun. Bottles of skin are still used in Spain, and called *borrachas*.—

Harmer.

NO. 97.—THE CURSE OF THE GIBEONITES.

ix. 23. *Ye are cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being bond-men, and hewers of wood, and drawers of water for the house of my God.*

The author of the Piratical States of Barbary assures us, that in the kingdom of Algiers women and children cut fuel and fetch the water. Pitts informs us, that the Algerine slaves do the work of maid servants; which, it appears, was the condition to which the Gibeonites were reduced.

The bitterness of the doom of the Gibeonites does not seem to have consisted in the laboriousness of the service enjoined them, since it was usual for women and children to perform the task, but its degrading them from the characteristic employment of men—that of bearing arms; and condemning them and their posterity for ever to the employment of females. The not receiving them as allies, was bitter; the disarming them, who had been warriors, and condemning

them to the employment of females, was worse; but the extending the degradation to their posterity, was the bitterest of all. It is no wonder that in such circumstances they are said to have been *cursed*.

This appears to throw light upon the prophetic language of Noah. *Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.*—Gen. ix. 25.

Harmer.

NO. 97.—DESCRIPTION OF ANCIENT CHARIOTS.

xvii. 16. *All the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron.*

This, perhaps, does not intimate that the chariots were made of iron; but that they were armed with it. They had a kind of scythe, about two cubits long, fastened to long axle-trees on both wheels: these being driven swiftly through a body of men, made a great slaughter, mowing them down like grass or corn. In addition to the horizontal scythes, Cyrus caused other scythes to be fixed under the same axle-tree, with their edges turned to the ground, that they might cut in pieces men or horses, or whatever the impetuous violence of the chariots should overturn. In after times they added two long iron spikes at the end of the pole, in order to pierce whatever came in the way; and armed the hinder part of the chariot with several rows of sharp knives, to hinder any one from mounting behind.—*Burder and Rollin.*

NO. 98.—THE INTERMENT OF JOSHUA.

xxiv. 30. *And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-serah.*

This signifies “the image of the sun,” which, according to some Jewish authors, was engraven on his

sepulchre in memory of that famous day when the sun stood still 'till he had completed his victory. Memorials, alluding to particular transactions in the lives of great men, were frequently used to adorn their tombs. Tully has recorded concerning Archimedes, that a sphere and a cylinder were put upon his monument.

Mallet informs us, that in an Egyptian vault was found the coffin of an embalmed female, before which was placed a figure of wood, representing a youth on his knees laying a finger on his mouth, and holding with his other hand a sort of chafing-dish, which was placed on his head, and in which had, probably, been some perfumes. This youth had divers hieroglyphical characters on his stomach. There was found in the mummy a small vessel, about a foot long, filled with balsam, commonly used to preserve bodies from corruption. This, probably, was a distinguishing mark for such as had been employed in embalming the dead. He speaks of another mummy, whose right hand was placed upon his stomach, and under it were found the strings of a musical instrument, perfectly preserved. From hence he concludes, that this was the body of a person who had a great taste for music. This, he thinks, was the general Egyptian custom, to give some sign by which the character of the party should be known.—*Harmer.*

JUDGES.

NO. 100.—DISMOUNTING, A TOKEN OF RESPECT.

i. 14. *And she lighted from off her ass.*

THE alighting of those that ride, is considered in the East as an expression of great respect. Dr.

Pococke tells us, that in Egypt they descend from their asses on their approaching certain tombs ; and that Christians and Jews are alike obliged to submit to this custom. According to Hasselquist, the Christians in Egypt are obliged to alight from their asses when they meet with any military commanders, which he complains of as a bitter indignity. If Naaman's alighting from his chariot, when Gehazi ran after him, arose from the same principle, the cure must have produced a very great change in the haughty Syrian. Rebecca's alighting from the camel on which she rode, when Isaac came to meet her, may convince us that this is not a modern expression of reverence.

Niebuhr tells us, that in Grand Cairo there are more than thirty Mahomedans, to whom this respect must be paid. When they appear in public they send a domestic before them, to give notice to the Jews, Greeks, and Europeans, that they may meet with, to get off their asses as soon as possible, and are qualified to force the refractory with a great club, which they always carry in their hands.—*Harmer*,

NO. 101.—POMPOUS MANNER OF OFFERING PRESENTS.

iii. 18. *And when he had made an end to offer the present, he sent away the people that bare the present.*

There is often in the East a great deal of pomp and parade in presenting their gifts. Maillet says, they never fail to load upon four or five horses what might easily be carried by one. So with regard to jewels, trinkets, and other things of value ; they place in fifteen dishes what a single plate would very well hold. Something of this pomp seems to be referred to, in this passage, where we read of *making an end of offering*

the present and of a number of people that bare it ; all which may point out the introducing, with great distinctness, as well as ceremony, every part of the present sent to this ancient Prince.

This might illustrate the account given us of Benhadad's present to the Prophet Elisha, which consisted of *forty camels burthen of the good things of Damascus*. This Syrian Prince, without doubt, sent Elisha a present answerable to his magnificence; but we cannot suppose it to be the full loading of forty camels, but that the present was carried in state, and no fewer than forty camels were employed in the cavalcade.—*2 Kings, viii. 9.*

Maillet says, that their frequent visits are preceded by presents of fowls, sheep, rice, coffee, and other fowls of different kinds. The visits which relations and friend make regularly to each other were in use among the ancient Egyptians; and though they are often made without going out of the same city, yet they never fail of lasting three or four days, and sometimes eight. They carry all their family with them; and their presents are proportionate to their rank and the number of their attendants.—*Harmer.*

NO. 102.—DESCRIPTION OF AN EASTERN OX-GOAD.

iii. 31. *And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox-goad.*

An extract from Maundrell may, in some measure, explain this transaction. He says, “the country people were now at plough in the fields, in order to sow cotton. It was observable that in ploughing they used goads of an extraordinary size; upon measuring

of several I found them about eight feet long, and, at the bigger end, six inches in circumference. They were armed at the lesser end with a sharp prickle, for driving the oxen, and at the other end with a small spade or paddle of iron, strong and massy, for cleansing the plow from the clay which incumbers it in working. May we not from hence conjecture, that it was with such a goad as one of these that *Shamgar* made that prodigious slaughter related of him. I am confident, that whoever should see one of these instruments would judge it to be a weapon not less fitted than a sword for such an execution. Goads of this sort are always used hereabout, and also in Syria; and the reason is, because the same person both drives the oxen and holds and manages the plough, which makes it necessary to use such a goad, to avoid the incumbrance of two instruments."—*Burder*.

No. 103.—JAEL'S CONDUCT TO SISERA.

iv. 19. *Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink, for I am thirsty ; and she opened a bottle of milk and gave him drink, &c.*

The bottle which she opened was probably a skin, a leather bottle, with which, agreeably to the Arab mode, she had been churning ; and pouring its contents into a bowl fit to be presented to a man of Sisera's quality, and doubtless the best she had in the tent, she offered him butter-milk to drink ; which was probably the occasion of Deborah's speaking of *milk and butter*. Jaël certainly shewed her regard to Israel by destroying Sisera ; but it is certain that she did not do it in the most honourable manner : there was treachery in it—perhaps, in the estimation of those people, the

greatest treachery. Among the later Arabs, giving a person drink has been thought to be the strongest assurance of their receiving him under their protection. D'Herbelot informs us, that when Guy de Lusignan, King of Jerusalem, was taken prisoner, and was conducted before Saladin, he demanded drink; and they gave him fresh water, which he drank in Saladin's presence; but when one of his Lords would have done the same, Saladin would not suffer it, because he did not intend to spare his life; on the contrary, advancing to him, after some expostulations, he cut off his head.

Shaw, describing the tents of the Bedouen Arabs, says, that they are kept firm by bracing down their eyes with cords tied down to hooked wooden pins, well pointed, which they drive into the ground with a mallet: one of these pins, he thinks, answers to the nail, and the mallet to the hammer, which Jael used in fastening Sisera to the ground.—*Harmer.*

NO. 104.—WHITE ASSES RODE BY PERSONS OF DISTINCTION.

v. 10. *Speak ye that ride on white asses, ye that sit in judgment, and walk by the way.*

In this song Deborah expressly addresses herself to those who *sit in judgment*, whom she describes as riding upon *white asses*. Officers of justice appear to form a part of the procession, and are going up to the high place, for the purpose of holding their annual judgment. They ride on asses, which appear white from the garments which have been spread over them for the accommodation of their riders; none but white garments being worn by the Hebrews during their public festivals and days of rejoicing.

Josephus informs us, that when Alexander the Great came to Jerusalem, he was met by the people in white raiment; the priests going before them. It was customary to throw the white garments thus worn over the animals which carried persons of distinction. Dr. Gill seems to think that they really were *white asses*; for Cartwright tells us, that on the banks of the Euphrates, he had frequently seen large droves of wild beasts, as wild asses, &c. all white.—*Burder.*

Let such as sit in judgment be thankful that the sword of justice is not struck out of their hand by the sword of war; and those who “walk by the way,” express their gratitude to God, for clearing the roads of the *banditti* which had so long infested them.

Henry.

NO. 105.—EASTERN WARRIORS MAGNIFICENTLY CLOTHED.

v. 30. *Have they not sped? have they not divided the prey? to Sisera a prey of divers colours, of divers colours of needle-work, of divers colours of needle-work on both sides?*

Rough as the Eastern warriors are in their manners, they frequently wear very pompous vestments. Lady Montague speaks of the Aga of the Janizaries;* that she saw him clothed in a robe of purple velvet, lined with silver tissue, and his horse led by two slaves richly dressed. She says, that in the East the ladies pass their time at their looms, embroidering veils and robes, surrounded by their maids.

These were the richest part of the spoil, being highly esteemed by all people. Homer speaks of painted

* The General of the most honourable body of Turkish troops:

garments, which shone with flowers and trees, in beautiful colors. The Phrygians afterwards wrought these with needles; and Attalus invented the inter-weaving of gold into them. Babylon was famous for these garments, from whence they had the name of Babylonish garments, and were much valued.—Josh. vii. 21. It appears from the language of Sisera's mother, that they were worked at times both on the inside and the outside “meet for the necks of them that take the spoil.”—*Burder.*

NO. 106.—CHAINS ON THE NECKS OF CAMELS A MARK OF DISTINCTION.

viii. 26. *The chains that were about their camels' necks.*

Bishop Pococke, speaking of the Agas of the seven military bodies of Egypt, says, that he saw *chains* hanging from their bridles to the breast-plates of the animals on which they rode, in the grand procession of the caravan that was setting out for Mecca. He says, that the chains of the Agas were made of silver; but those of the Midianitish Kings were of gold. They were undoubtedly marks of distinction and grandeur.

The Arabs not only used to ride camels, but to feast upon them. We have an account of a royal Arab camel-feast, in which the dinner was served up in large wooden bowls, about fifty or sixty in number. In the middle was one of a larger size than all the rest, in which were the camel's bones, and a thin broth in which they were boiled. It was mixed with rice, currants, and spices.—*Philosophical Transactions.*

NO. 107.—JEPHTHAH'S VOW TO THE LORD.

11. 30. *And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord.*

It appears that Jephthah believed that he should be

more certain of the victory if he made a religious *vow* of being grateful to God for it. In this he acted conformably to the general practice of great warriors in all ages. Livy frequently mentions it as the custom of the Roman Generals; and says, they used to vow to Jupiter or Apollo part of the spoil they should take in war, or to build temples to their honor. Thus the Israelites, when Arad the Canaanite came against them, made a *vow* respecting his country, that if God would deliver it into their hand they would *utterly destroy all their cities*.—Num. xxi. 2.—*Burder.*

NO. 108.—VARIETY OF PRONUNCIATION IN THE EAST.

xii. 6. *Then said they unto him, say now Shibboleth: and he said Sibboleth: for he could not frame to pronounce it right.*

In Arabia the difference of *pronunciation*, by persons of various districts, is much greater than in most other places, and such as easily accounts for the circumstance mentioned in this passage. Niebuhr tells us, that the King of the Hamjares, at Dhafar, said to an Arab, a stranger, *théb*—meaning to say *sit down*; but as the same word in the dialect of the stranger signified *leap*, he leaped from an high place, and hurt himself: when this mistake was explained to the King, he said, “Let the Arab who comes to Dhafar first learn the Hamjare dialect.”

He says, that they not only speak quite differently in the mountains of the small district, which is governed by the Iman of Yemen, from what they do in the flat country; but persons of superior rank have a different pronunciation, and names for things different from those of the peasants. He adds, that the pronun-

ciation of certain letters is so different, that what the Arabs of the North and West pronounce as *k* or *q*, as *Maskat*, is pronounced *tsch*; so that *bukkra kiab* is by some called *butscher tschiab*.—*Burder*.

NO. 109.—EASTERN CUSTOM OF PROPOSING RIDDLES.

xiv. 12. *And Sampson said unto them, I will now put forth a riddle unto you : if you can certainly declare it me within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then I will give you thirty sheets, and thirty change of garments.*

This shews us how ancient the Grecian custom was of proposing questions, to be resolved in their feasts and compotations, that they might not be spent merely in eating and drinking, but that there might be something to exercise their wit and ingenuity.

Among the Greeks it was usual for the bride to give changes of dress to the friends of the bridegroom, at the celebration of the marriage. Homer represents Pallas as appearing to Nausicaa in a dream, and commanding her to descend to the river, and wash the robes of state, preparatory to her nuptials.

Oh, indolent, to waste thy hours away !
And sleep'st thou, careless of the bridal day ?
Thy spousal ornament neglected lies :
Arise, prepare the bridal train, arise.

POPE.

Dacier is of opinion, that the custom here alluded to prevailed among the Israelites, and that the proposition made by Sampson is grounded upon it. From this sentiment Mr. Pope dissents, thinking that it has relation to the custom amongst the ancients of proposing an enigma at festivals, and adjudging a reward to him that solved it.—*Burder*.

Mr. Harmer is of opinion that the *thirty sheets* here spoken of were, according to the margin of our bibles, *thirty shirts*. He justly says, that Sampson might have slain thirty Philistines, and not have met with one sheet; or if he slew such as were carrying their bedding with them in their travails, the destroying fifteen might have been sufficient, since the people in the East use an upper and an under sheet, like unto Europeans. Supposing it to be shirts, the Philistines whom he slew could not have been common people, but persons of figure and consequence; for the poorer sort of the people of Palestine wear nothing but a kind of mantle. The *thirty change of garments* appear to have been suits of apparel.—V. 19.

NO. 110.—CUSTOM OF PUTTING BRANDS TO FOXES' TAILS.

xv. 5. *And when he had set the brands on fire, he let them go into the standing corn of the Philistines.*

Perhaps there was nothing new or uncommon in this operation; as it was the most obvious, for the end proposed, that the wit of man could devise. It is alluded to proverbially more than once by Lycophron, who makes Cassandra represent Ulysses as a man both of cunning and mischief, and stiles him a fox with a fire-brand at his tail; for wherever he went mischief followed.

Ovid alludes to this practice, and mentions, that *foxes and fire-brands* were every year exhibited at Rome, and killed in the circus. It was the custom in many places to sacrifice, by way of retaliation, every animal, whether goat or swine, which did particular injury to the fruits of the earth.—*Burder.*

NO. III.—ROCKS AND CAVES, PLACES OF DEFENCE.

xv. 8. *And he went down and dwelt in the top of the rock Etam.*

It appears, that *rocks* are still resorted to as places of security ; and are even capable of sustaining a siege. De la Roque says, that the Grand Seignor, wishing to seize the person of the Emir, gave orders to the Pacha to take him prisoner. He went, with an army, in search of him in the district of Chouf, which is a part of Mount Lebanon, wherein is the village of Gesen, and close to it a rock, which served for a retreat to the Emir. The Pacha pressed the Emir so closely, that the unfortunate Prince was obliged to shut himself up in a cleft of the rock with a small number of his officers. Here the Pacha besieged him, for several months, and was on the point of blowing up the rock, when the Emir capitulated.

Places of this description were considered as very strong, and frequently resorted to in that country in the time of the Croisades, by those Christians who went from the West, and were perfectly well acquainted with the manner of fortifying places in Europe. One of those places, which the history of the Croisades mentions, was in the territory of Sidon.

The Archbishop of Tyre tells us, that Baldwin I. ordered fires to be kindled at the mouths of the *caves* in the neighbourhood of Askelon, that the enemy might be forced by the smoke to surrender himself, or be suffocated. This had the wished-for effect ; for they surrendered unto Baldwin, who ordered one hundred of them to be beheaded, and seized on their provisions and cattle. In the days of the Prophets, the Edomites were distinguished for dwelling in the *clefts of the rock*.—Jer. xlix. 16.—Harmer.

NO. 112.—THE WATER OF LEHI.

xv. 19. *God cleave an hollow place that was in the jaw,
and there came water thereout.*

Harmer appears to be fully of opinion, that the place from whence the water flowed, which quenched the thirst of Sampson, was not an hollow place in the jaw-bone of the ass, with which he slew a thousand of the Philistines, but the place of the exploit, which was called *Lehi*, or the *jaw-bone*. He thinks that God cleft an hollow place in the earth, containing an hidden reservoir of water, from which a fountain flowed, which relieved him when ready to perish, and which continued to yield a considerable supply of water at the time this book was written, and perhaps to this day.

Doubden speaks of his meeting with a cave or grotto in Lehi, in which the God of Nature had divided the rock for the passage of the water of a beautiful spring, which ran in a stream into the adjoining country, where the exhausted warrior stood. This, according to Harmer, is an explanation of the words, *Wherefore he called the name thereof En-hakkore, which is in Lehi unto this day*; that is to say, the spring continued to flow to the day in which the history was written, though some had been stopped by earthquakes, and other operations of Providence. This, according to Addison, has happened in Italy.

Sometimes, misguided by the tuneful throng,
I look for streams, immortalis'd in song,
That lost in silence and oblivion lie,
(Dumb are their fountains, and their channels dry.)
Yet run for ever by the muses' skill,
And in the smooth description murmur still,

NO. 113.—DESCRIPTION OF THE HOUSE OF DAGON.

xvi. 27. Now the house was full of men and women; and all the Lords of the Philistines were there: and there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Sampson made sport.

Some have asserted, that no building sufficiently capacious to hold such a multitude of people could be constructed so as to rest chiefly upon two pillars: but this is a mistake; for Pliny mentions two theatres, built by C. Curio, of amazing dimensions, and made of wood. They were so contrived that each of them depended upon one hinge. This led Pliny to censure the madness of the people, who would venture into a place for their pleasure, where they sat on such an uncertain and unstable seat; for if that hinge had given way, the slaughter had been greater than at the battle of Cannæ.

Shaw supposes the temple of Dagon to be of the same kind with the ancient sacred inclosures, surrounded in part, or altogether, with some plain or cloistered buildings. He says, that palaces and courts of justice in those countries are built in this fashion: and upon their festivals and rejoicings a great quantity of sand is strewed upon the area for the wrestlers to fall upon, whilst the roof of the cloisters round about is crowded with spectators. He tells us, he has often seen several hundreds of people diverted in this manner upon the roof of the Dey's palace, at Algiers, which hath an advanced cloister over against the gate of the palace, made in the fashion of a large pent-house, supported only by one or two contiguous pillars in the front, or else in the centre. Sampson must have been in a court or area below; and, upon a

supposition that in the house of Dagon was a cloistered structure of this kind, the pulling down the front, or centre pillars which supported it, must have occasioned the catastrophe which happened to the Philistines.—

Burder.

NO. 114.—CONDUCT OF THE LEVITE TOWARDS HIS CONCUBINE.

xix. 29. *And when he was come into his house, he took a knife, and laid hold on his concubine, and divided her, together with her bones, into twelve pieces, and sent her into all the coasts of Israel.*

This conduct of the Levite was, doubtless, intended to excite a general indignation against the authors of the injury which he had sustained: he intended to invite the whole nation in vengeance against a crime full of detestation and cruelty: but as they might be checked in the extent of the punishment by the number, the credit, and power of the offenders,—by the natural commiseration for those of the same blood,—or by an aversion to involve a city in destruction, he adopted a method which necessitated them to espouse his cause; for he cut his wife in pieces, and sent a part to each of the tribes. In consequence of this, every tribe entered into an indissoluble engagement, to see justice done him for the injury he had received.

The Ancients had various ways of uniting themselves by strict ties; which lasted for a stipulated time. One method was that of cutting in pieces a bullock which had been devoted in sacrifice, and distributing it. All who partook of this bullock were to concur in carrying on the affair which had occa-

sioned the sacrifice. Such as were in power would send a piece of the victim to all their subjects, and thus oblige them to enter into their views*: but if the sacrifice were offered by a private person, those only who voluntarily took a piece of the sacrifice entered into a strict engagement to espouse his interest. Connections of this kind derived their force from the deities in honor of which the sacrifice was offered. The Pagans used to place upon an altar of green turf the deities which presided over their covenant.

Lucian informs us, that among the Scythians and Molossians, when any one had received an injury, and had not the means of avenging himself, he sacrificed an ox and cut it into pieces, which he caused to be dressed and publicly exposed; then he spread out the skin of the victim, and sat upon it, with his hands tied behind him. All who chose to take part in the injury took up a piece of the ox, and swore to support him according to their ability.—*Burder.*

NO. 115.—DANCING OF THE DAUGHTERS OF SHILOH.

xxi. 21. If the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in dances, then come ye out of the vineyards, and catch you every man his wife.

The dancing of the daughters of Shiloh was of a different kind from the public rejoicings of the vintage, and appears to be a particular religious solemnity, observed by the virgins of that town exclusively. The vineyards might have been chosen for their solitude; and it appears that they were altogether unattended by men. It was manifestly a religious solemnity, for it is expressly called *a feast of the Lord*.—V.19.

* 1 Sam. xi. 7.

Had this been a feast common to all Israel, no reason could be assigned for mentioning *Shiloh* only; but it seems to have been particular to the inhabitants of that town. There were voluntary annual solemnities observed by Israel: some of these were of the mournful kind, as that for the daughter of Jephthah, Jud. xi. 40: others were of the joyous sort, as the days of Purim, Est. ix. 20. 28. So the dancing solemnity seems to have been one of those voluntary joyous appointments, but peculiar to Shiloh.

It is doubtful whether this solemnity was perfectly innocent, founded in some remarkable mercy that had been granted to Shiloh, such as might have been established by the men of Jabesh-Gilead, in commemoration of their narrow escape from Nahash the Ammonite, 1 Sam. xi; or a more faulty solemnity, which arose from an old heathenish custom, that had long been established in Shiloh, in honor of some of their idols, or in consequence of some vain opinion prevalent in that place.—*Harmer.*

Dr. Chandler informs us, that the Greek Christians retained many of the old practices of their idolatrous ancestors. As Athens was anciently enlivened by chorusses, singing, and dancing in the open air, in the front of the temples of the gods, and round their altars, at the festivals of Bacchus, and other holy days; so the Greeks are frequently engaged in the same exercises on the anniversary of their saints, and often in the areas before their churches.

NO. 116.—VINEGAR AND OIL EATEN WITH BREAD.

ii. 14. *Dip thy morsel in the vinegar.*

WHEN Boaz is represented as providing *vinegar* for his reapers, into which they might dip their bread, and kindly inviting Ruth to share with them in the repast, we are not to understand it as simple *vinegar*, but vinegar mingled with a portion of oil; if modern customs in the Levant may be allowed to be a comment on those of antiquity.

According to Pitts, the Algerines indulge their miserable captives with a small portion of oil to the vinegar they allow them with their bread. He says, that when he was in slavery, his allowance was about five or six spoonfuls of vinegar, half a spoonful of oil, a small quantity of black biscuit, and a pint of water per day, together with a few olives.—*Harmer.*

NO. 117.—SINGULAR MANNER OF CONFIRMATION.

iv. 7. *Now this was the manner in former times in Israel, concerning redeeming, and concerning changing, for to confirm all things: a man plucked off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbour.*

It is not easy to give an account of the origin of this custom; but the reason of it appears to be plain, it being a natural signification that he resigned his interest in the land, by giving him his shoe wherewith he used to walk in it, that he might enter into, and take possession of it himself.

Castell mentions, that the Emperor of the Abyssinians used the casting of a *shoe*, as a sign of dominion. Thus in Psalm ix. 8. we read, *over Edom will I cast out my shoe.*

In later times the Jews delivered a handkerchief

for the same purpose. R. Solomon Jarchi says, we acquire, or buy now, by a handkerchief or veil, instead of a shoe. It appears, that the giving of a glove was, in the middle ages, a ceremony of investiture in bestowing lands and dignities. In A. D. 1002, two Bishops were put in possession of their sees, each by receiving a glove. So in England, in the reign of Edward the Second, the deprivation of gloves was a ceremony of degradation.—*Burder.*

I. SAMUEL.

NO. 118.—HIGH-RAISED SEATS, PLACES OF HONOR.

iv. 18. *He fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died.*

THOUGH the sitting cross-legged on mats and carpets on the ground is now the common usage of the East, yet it is certain that anciently seats were raised to a considerable height from the ground, so as to make it necessary to have a foot-stool.

Chardin says, that the Persian carvings at Persepolis frequently exhibit a venerable personage sitting on a sort of high-raised chair with a footstool; but the later Sovereigns of that country have sat, with their legs under them, on a carpet or cushion laid on the floor, like their subjects. According to Norden, sitting low is practised by all sorts of people, from the highest to the lowest, in Egypt; but two very ancient colossal statues there are placed on cubical stones in our general attitude of sitting. In the ancient Syrian coin, the figures are represented as sitting on seats like unto Europeans; from which we may conclude

that persons in high life, in those countries, sat after a similar manner to ourselves; but the people in general sat upon the ground or floor.

It appears that Eli, the Judge and High-Priest of Israel, sat on an high seat, when the fatal news of the defeat of his people was brought to him, and that, falling from it, he *brake his neck and died*. These seats were used in other parts of the East besides Judea; for St. James writing to the Jews, in their dispersion, speaks of them as using seats that required a *footstool*.—James ii. 3.—*Harmer*.

NO. 119.—GOD'S JUDGMENT UPON DAGON.

v. 4. *The head of Dagon, and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold.*

Lady Montague, speaking of the Turkish Minister of State, tells us, that if a Minister displeases the people, he is soon dragged from his master's arms, and cutting off his hands, head, and feet, they throw them before the palace-gate; while the Sultan, to whom they profess unlimited adoration, sits trembling in his apartment. The hands and feet of the sons of Rimmon, who slew Ishbosheth, were *cut off, and hanged up over the pool of Hebron*, as a place of great resort.—2 Sam. iv. 12.

This destruction of *Dagon* before the ark of the Lord clearly discovered the vanity of idols, and the irresistible power of God. *Dagon* was not merely thrown down, but was also broken in pieces, and some of its fragments were found on the *threshold*. In this circumstance we discover a conformity to the manner in which different nations treated their hostile deities. Maurice informs us, when speaking of the

destruction of the idol temple at Sumnaut, that the fragments of the demolished idol were distributed to the several mosques of Mecca, Medina, and Gazna, to be thrown at the threshold of their gates, and trampled upon by the devout and zealous Musselmen.

The threshold of the palace of a living or dead Prince, was the place where such as would do them honor prostrated themselves, touching it with their foreheads in token of solemn reverence.

Tibullus informs us, that to beat the head against the sacred threshold was, with many, an expiatory ceremony. It probably originated with the Egyptians in the worship of Isis.

For crimes like these I'd abject crawl the ground,
Kiss her dread threshold, and my forehead wound.

GRAINGER.

NO. 120.—TRESPASS-OFFERING OF THE PHILISTINES.

vi. 4. *Then said they, what shall be the trespass offering which we shall return to him ? They answered, five golden emerods, and five golden mice.*

It appears that mice have been extremely troublesome, and indeed destructive, to Palestine. William, Archbishop of Tyre, informs us, that a penitential council was held at Naplouse in the year 1120, where five and twenty canons were framed for the correction of the manners of the inhabitants of the Christian kingdom of Jerusalem, who, they apprehended, had provoked God to bring upon them the calamities of earthquakes, war, and famine. This last the Archbishop ascribes to locusts and devouring mice, which had, for four years together, destroyed the fruits of the earth.

The ancient Heathen used to consecrate to their gods such monuments of their deliverances as represented the evils from which they were rescued. Thus slaves and captives, on regaining their liberty, used to offer their chains; and the Philistines, hoping shortly to be delivered from the *emerods* and the *mice*, with which they were afflicted, sent the images of them to that God from whom they expected deliverance. This is still practised among the Indians.—Tavernier relates, that when any pilgrim goes to a pagod for the cure of any disease, he takes the figure of the member affected, made either of gold, silver, or copper, according to his quality, which he offers to his god. Tablets were usually hung up in the temple of Isis, describing the manner of their deliverance or cure.

That you can every mortal ill remoye
The num'rous tablets in your temple prove.

Tibullus.

NO. 121.—PRESENTS ESSENTIAL TO EASTERN INTER-COURSE.

ix. 7. *There is not a present to bring to the man of God.*

Such as are prejudiced against the sacred history, and unacquainted with Eastern customs, may be ready, from the donations to the Prophets, to imagine that they were a mercenary set of people, and to rank them with fortune-tellers, who will not from principles of benevolence reveal their knowledge of future events, but demand of the anxious enquirer a large reward. The truth is, that presenting gifts is an universal custom among the Orientals.—*Harmer.*

D'Herbelot tells us, that Bokhteri, a poet of Cufah, had so many presents made him, that at his death he

was found possessed of an hundred suits of clothes, two hundred shirts, and five hundred turbans.

Maundrell says, it is counted uncivil to visit in the East without an offering in hand: all great men expect it as a kind of tribute due to their character and authority, and look upon themselves as affronted, and, indeed, defrauded, when this compliment is omitted. Even in familiar visits, among the inferior of society, it is common to present a flower, an orange, or some such token of respect to the person visited. Thus the language of Saul must be understood as relating to a token of respect, and not a price of divination.

Mr. Bruce says, that presents are essentially necessary to civil intercourse in the East, whether they be dates or diamonds; and that without them an inferior will never be at peace in his own mind, or think that he has hold of his superiors for protection.

NO. 122.—SLEEPING ON THE TOPS OF HOUSES.

ix. 26. *And they rose early: and it came to pass about the spring of the day, that Samuel called Saul to the top of the house, saying, Up, that I may send thee away.*

At Aleppo, and in Judea, they sleep in the summer season on the tops of their houses, which are always flat, covered with plaster of terrace, divided from each other by walls, and guarded on every side by a low parapet wall.* Egmont and Hayman inform us, that at Carpha, at the foot of Mount Carmel, the houses are small, with a flat roof; and, during the summer season, the people sleep upon them in arbours made of

* Deut. xxii. 8.

the boughs of trees. They mention also tents of rushes, on the flat-roofs of the houses at Tiberias. Dr. Pococke tells us, that when he was at Tiberias, in Galilee, in the month of May, he was entertained by the Sheik's steward, and supped upon *the top of the house*, for coolness, according to their custom, and lodged there in a sort of closet about eight feet square, of wicker-work, plastered round towards the bottom, but without any door, each person having his proper cell.

Thus it appears, that Samuel conversed with Saul, for coolness, on the house-top, in the evening; and in the morning called *Saul*, who had lodged there all night, and was not gotten up, saying, *up that I may send thee away*. As their sleeping on the terraces of their houses was only in summer time, the inauguration of Saul was, doubtless, in that part of the year.—

Harmer.

This custom, of sleeping on the house-top, appears to have been equally conducive to health and pleasure. Wood says, “we found it to be extremely agreeable, as we thereby enjoyed the cool air, above the reach of gnats and vapours, without any other covering than the canopy of heaven.”

NO. 123.—PROCESSION OF THE PROPHETS.

x. 5. *Thou shalt meet a company of Prophets coming down from the high-place, with a psaltery & a tabret.*

We are told in a book which gives an account of the sufferings of the crew of an English privateer wrecked on the coast of Africa, in 1745, that when the African children have gotten the Koran by hearf, their relations borrow a fine horse and furniture, and

carry them about the town in procession, with the book in their hands: all sorts of music of the country is played before them, and their companions follow after them.

Mr. Harmer considers this as a lively comment upon the Jewish procession before us. He says, it has often been remarked, that the word *Prophets* sometimes signifies sons, or scholars, of the Prophets; and that *prophesying* signifies singing; and thinks, that if we consider them as a company of the sons of the Prophets going in procession, with songs of praise, and music playing before them, according to the custom of South Barbary, the whole mystery will be unravelled. Saul's being turned into another man might signify a communication of an extensive knowledge in the law of God, such as the youth possessed, to whom they were doing these honors; which knowledge was necessary for one that was to judge among his brethren as their King.—Deut. xvii. 18.

NO. 124.—TIME OF THUNDER-SHOWERS IN JUDEA.

xii. 17. *Is it not wheat-harvest to-day? I will call unto the Lord, and he shall send thunder and rain.*

Dr. Russell tells us, that at Aleppo, in the night of the first of July, 1743, some severe thunder-showers fell; and adds, “it was very extraordinary at that season.” Perhaps it was more uncommon still at Jerusalem; for St. Jerome, who lived long in the Holy Land, says, in his commentary on Amos, that he had never seen rain in those provinces, and especially in Judea, in the end of June or in the month of July. The fact recorded in the eighteenth verse is an authentic proof of what Samuel had affirmed, that their wickedness was great. When a very rare and un-

usual event happens without any preceding appearance of such a thing, immediately upon the prediction of a person professing himself to be a Prophet, and giving this as an attestation of his being a messenger of God, it is a sufficient proof of a divine mission.

The *thunder and rain* here spoken of appear to have been in the day-time, while Samuel and the Israelites continued together, solemnizing the inauguration of Saul. This circumstance must have added considerably to the energy of this event; for Russell informs us, that the rains in those countries usually fall in the night.—*Harmer.*

NO. 125.—THE POWERFUL INFLUENCE OF MUSIC.

xvi. 23. *And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God, was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.*

It appears that Saul was desirous of obtaining such a person as David, whose skill in music might contribute both to his gratification and state: and it, doubtless, formed a part of royal Eastern magnificence to have men of this description about the courts.

According to Richardson, there are professed story-tellers in the East; and men of rank have generally one or more, male or female, amongst their attendants, who amuse them and their women when they are melancholy, vexed, or indisposed; and are generally employed to lull them to sleep. Many of their tales appear to be amusing, especially those of Persian origin. Mahommied thought those persons to be so dangerous, that he has expressly prohibited them in the Koran.

The power of music upon the affections is, doubtless, very great. It is stated of Timotheus, the musician, that he could excite Alexander the Great to arms with the Phrygian sound, and again allay his fury and excite him to merriment. So Eric, King of Denmark, by a certain musician, could be driven to such a fury as to kill some of his best and most trusty servants.—*Burder.*

NO. 126.—THE PHILISTINE CURSING DAVID.

xvii. 43. *And the Philistine cursed David by his Gods.*

Burder says, it is highly probable that this was a general practice among the Idolaters, who supposing themselves secure of the favor and protection of their deities, concluded that their enemies must, necessarily, be the objects of their displeasure and vengeance. Hence, anticipating the certainty of divine wrath upon them, they *cursed* and devoted them to destruction. Thus the *Philistine* acted towards *David*; and after this manner the Romans used to act. The mode of his speaking and challenging was very common among the Orientals. Homer gives the same haughty air to his heroes; and it was, "doubtless," a copy of the manners and hyperbolical speeches of the times.—

Bold as thou art, too prodigal of breath,
Approach, and enter the dark gates of death.

NO. 127.—DAVID'S CONDUCT TOWARDS GOLIATH.

xvii. 45. *I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts,
the God of the armies of Israel.*

The decision of national contests by the duels of the chiefs, was frequent in ancient times. That between the Horatii and Curiatii is well known: and before that, Romulus, and Aruns King of the Ceninenses,

ended their national quarrel by the like method; Romulus killing his adversary, taking his capital, and dedicating the spoils to Jupiter Feretrius.—*Burder.*

According to Polybius, the dexterity with which the sling may be used, as an offensive weapon, is surprising. The arms which the Achians chiefly used were slings. They were trained to the art from their infancy, by slinging from a great distance at a circular mark of a moderate circumference. By long practice they took so nice an aim, that they were sure to hit their enemies.

Niebuhr says, that the cutting off the head of a slain enemy, and carrying it in triumph, is an ancient custom. He has given us a scene of this description; where the son of an Arab Chief kills his father's enemy and rival, and, according to the custom of the Arabs, cuts off his head, and carries it in triumph to his father. Xenophon remarks, that it was practised by the Chalybes. Herodotus attributes it to the Scythians.

Morgan tells us, in his History of Algiers, that Barbarossa having slain the King of Cucco, and conquered his army of African Highlanders, returned in triumph, with the King's *head* carried before him on a lance. Mr. Harmer thinks, that this was the way in which David carried the head of the Philistine, which he presented with Eastern ceremony to his Prince; and that such was probably the way in which Saul's head was carried before the Philistine General of the victorious army.

Ev'ry day the Lord of hosts his mighty pow'r displays,
Stills the proud *Philistines* boast, the threat'ning *Gittite* slays:
Israel's God let all below conqu'r'or over sin proclaim:
O that all the earth might know the pow'r of Jesus' name.

NO. 128.—COVENANTS MADE BY BLOOD.

xviii. 3. *Then Jonathan and David made a covenant.*

Various ceremonies have been used on those occasions. When treaties were made, either of a private or public nature, such usages were observed as were of established authority, or significantly important. The Scythians had a peculiar method of forming their treaties. Herodotus relates, that they first poured wine into a large earthen vessel, and then the contracting parties, cutting their arms with a knife, let some of their blood run into the wine, and stained their armour with it. After this, themselves, and all that were present, drank of the liquor, making the strongest imprecations against the person who should violate the treaty.—*Burder.*

Xenophon tells us, that the Easterns covenanted by dipping their weapons in blood; and by pricking the flesh, and sucking each other's blood. Tacitus says, that when Kings made a league they took each other by the hand, and their thumbs being tied hard together, and the blood forced to the extreme parts, they pricked them, and each party licked the blood. This was accounted a mysterious covenant, being made sacred by their mutual blood.

NO. 129.—JONATHAN'S ESTEEM FOR DAVID.

xviii. 4. *And Jonathan stript himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.*

D'Herbelot tells us, that when Sultan Selim, the son of Bajazet, had defeated Canson Gouri, Sultan of the Mamelukes of Egypt, he assisted at prayers in a

mosque at Aleppo, upon his triumphant return to Constantinople; and that the Iman of the mosque having added at the close of the prayer these words—“may God preserve Selim Khaif, the servant and minister of the two sacred cities of Mecca and Medi-nah,” the title was so very agreeable to the Sultan, that he gave the robe he had on him to the Iman; and that from that time forward the Ottoman Emperors have always used it in their letters patent, as Kings of Egypt.—*Harmer.*

According to Homer, it was an ancient custom to make military presents to bold adventurers.—

THE ILIAD.

Next him Ulysses took a shining sword,
A bow and quiver, with bright arrows stor'd;
A well prov'd casque, with leather braces bound,
(Thy gift, Meriones) his temples crownd.

THE ILIAD.

NO. 130.—CONDUCT OF VICTORS TOWARDS AN ENEMY.

xviii. 25. *And Saul said, thus shall ye say to David,*
The King desireth not any dowry; but an hundred
foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the
King's enemies.

This custom has prevailed in later times, in some countries, to give their daughters in marriage to the most valiant men, or those who should bring them so many heads of their enemies. It is reported of a people in Carminia, that if any were desirous to marry, it was necessary he should first bring the head of an enemy to the King.—*Burder.*

The Indians in North America are not contented with killing their enemies, but produce their scalps as proofs of the number they have destroyed. These ocular proofs of success in war were agreeable,

enough for unpolished times, but it is astonishing to find something of the sort lately practised in so polite a country as Persia. Chardin informs us, that in the war of the Persians against the Yuzbecks, the Persians took the beards of their enemies and carried them to the King.—*Harmer.*

NO. 131.—DESCRIPTION OF GATES AND THEIR FASTENINGS.

xxiii. 7. He is shut in, by entering into a town that hath gates and bars.

Vain would have been the precaution of raising their walls to a great height, if their *gates* had not been well secured. Pitts informs us, that Algiers has five gates, and some of these have two or three other gates within them, some of which are plated all over with thick iron; being made strong and convenient for what it is—a nest of pirates!

The place where St. Peter was imprisoned appears to have been secured after a similar manner. *When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city, which opened to them of its own accord.*—*Acts xii. 10.*

Dr. Pococke, speaking of a bridge not far from Antioch, called the *iron-bridge*, says, there are two towers belonging to it, the gates of which are covered with iron plates; which he supposes is the reason why it is called the *iron-bridge*. Maundrell informs us, that some of their gates are, in like manner, plated over with brass. Such are the large gates of the church of St. John Baptist at Damascus, now converted into a mosque.

The curious have remarked, that if their gates are sometimes of iron and brass, their locks and keys are often of wood, and that not only of their houses, but sometimes of their cities too. Thevenot says, that all the locks and keys of Grand Cairo are made of wood. Probably it was so anciently, and that in contradiction to them we read of cities with walls and brazen bars—1 Kings, iv. 13.; and of breaking in pieces *gates of brass and bars of iron*.—Isa. xlv. 2.

Dr. Russell says, that the gates, beside these locks, have large wooden *bars*, which draw out from the wall on each side, which are intended for defence.—

Harmer.

NO. 132.—WATER, THE PRINCIPAL BEVERAGE.

xxv. 11. *Shall I take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men whom I know not?*

It appears, that they not only drink *water* very commonly in the East, but it is considered as an important part of the provisions made for a repast, and is sent as such to *shearers* and reapers in particular. The words of Nabal to David's messengers have perhaps surprised many readers; but a passage from Mr. Drummond's Travels may diminish the surprise. He says, “the men and women were employed in reaping; and this operation they performed by cutting off the ears and pulling up the stubble; which method has always been followed in the East: other females were busy in carrying water to the reapers; so that none but infants were unemployed. Here we see it no longer a wonder that Nabal had provided water to be carried to his shearers. The value of water in the

East is much greater than is commonly understood. Its scarcity in many instances renders a well an important possession: hence it is not to be wondered at, that contention should arise on the probability of loosing it.—Gen. xxvi. 20. When Moses was desirous of passing through the country of the Edomites, he promised them satisfaction for the benefit of their water. *If I and my cattle drink of thy water, then I will pay for it.*

NO. 133.—METHOD OF PRESERVING FIGS.

xxv. 18. *And two hundred cakes of figs.*

Dr. Chandler tells us, that he purchased some dried figs in Lesser Asia, which were strung like beads; and he found them extremely good and cheap. Hence Mr. Harmer thinks, that the collections of figs mentioned in the scriptures were strings of this dried fruit, rather than *cakes*, or *lumps*, as it is translated in the words before us, and in Isaiah xxxviii. 21.

Dried figs when closely packed will certainly adhere together, as is manifest in English shops, and may be called *cakes* or *lumps*; and from thence our translators seem to have derived their ideas: but it does not follow from thence, that they appear in the like form in the countries where they are actually dried, and laid up among other stores, for their own consumption. What notion can a reader form of the quantity of figs, if the accidental lumps of adhering figs were meant? Some lumps are ten times larger than others when they are taken out of the vessel in which they have been packed, and strongly squeezed together: a more determinate notion seems to have been intended by that term.

The Doctor has said nothing of the number of figs usually put on one string; or of the weight of one of these strings. It would seem they were but small, since Abigail carried David twice as many strings of figs as dried bunches of grapes.—*Harmer.*

NO. 134.—NATURE OF EASTERN ENCAMPMENTS:

xxvi. 5. And Saul lay in the trench, and the people pitched round about him.

In the Croisade wars their encampments seem often to have been much less strong than in modern times; and we may believe that of *Saul*, when he pursued after David, was still less guarded.

Mr. Harmer says, it can hardly be imagined that the Hebrew word, translated *trench*, signifies a ditch and bank thrown up, as one would suppose our translators had apprehended; for it appears from the history, that they took no precautions against David. Nor does it appear to mean a ring of carriages, as it is supposed in the margin; for, most probably, the passage of carriages was impracticable in that mountainous country. It seems simply to mean, the circle which was formed by the troops; in the midst of which, as in the place of honor, *Saul* slept.

The view D'Arvieux gives us of a modern Arab camp agrees with this account of *Saul*, only supposing, that, for the sake of expedition, they carried no tents with them. He tells us, that an Arab camp is always round when the disposition of the ground will permit. There were eighteen Emirs, or Princes, who governed the Arabs of Mount Carmel. The Grand Emir, or chief of these Princes, encamped in the middle, and the Arabs round about him; but so as to leave a re-

spectful distance between them, their lances being fixed near them in the ground, ready for action. Thus Homer speaks of Diomed sleeping in his arms, with his soldiers about him, and the spears sticking upright in the earth :—

Without his tent bold Diomed they found,
All sheath'd in arms, his brave companions round ;
Each sunk in sleep, extended on the field,
His head reclining on his bossy shield :
A wood of spears stood by, that, fix'd upright,
Shot from their fashing points a quiv'ring light.

POPE.

NO. 135.—TENTS PITCHED NEAR FOUNTAINS.

xxix. 1. *And the Israelites pitched by a fountain which is in Jezreel.*

The Archbishop of Tyre tells us, that the Christian Kings of Jerusalem used to assemble their forces at a fountain between Nazareth and Sepphoris. This fountain being near the center of the kingdom, they could march most commodiously to any place where their presence was wanted. He mentions another fountain near a town called Little Gerinum, which he says was the ancient Jezreel : near this Saladin pitched his camp for the benefit of its waters.

This appears to be explanatory of Psalm lxviii. 26. *Bless ye God in the congregations, even the Lord from the fountain of Israel :* this might have been addressed to the assembly of Israel gathered together for war. It is natural to suppose they used to assemble near some plentiful fountain, which place must have been well known in those days ; and might, in the language of poetry, be called *the fountain of Israel.* Bless God in your warlike assemblies, even the Lord from the foun-

tain of Israel; the place of your rendezvous ; for the Lord shall bless you in your consultations there, and you may march from thence with songs of praise and confident hopes of success.

Scarcity of water makes the Easterns careful to take up their lodgings near some river, fountain, or well. Thus the men of David waited for him by the brook Besor, I Samuel, xxx. 21. According to Dr. Pococke, it is usual for them to halt wherever they find a spring.—

Harmer.

NO. 136.—SPOILS DEDICATED TO THE GODS.

xxxi. 10. *They put his armour in the house of Ash-daroth; and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan.*

The custom of dedicating to the gods the spoils of a conquered enemy, and placing them in their temples, as trophies of victory, is very ancient. Homer represents Hector promising, that, if he should conquer Ajax in single combat, he would dedicate his spoils to Apollo.—

And if Apollo, in whose aid I trust,
Shall stretch your daring champion in the dust,
If mine the glory to despoil the foe,
On Phœbus' temple I'll his arms bestow.

Pope.

After the death of Saul we find, that *they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan.* Capital offences were sometimes punished by throwing the criminal upon hooks that were fixed in the wall below, where, frequently, they hung, in the most exquisite agonies, thirty or forty hours before they expired. The exposure of the body of Saul might be nothing more than the fixing of it to such hooks as were placed there for the execution of their criminals.—*Burder.*

NO. 137.—BRACELETS, AN ENSIGN OF ROYALTY.

i. 10. *I took the crown that was upon his head, and the bracelet that was on his arm, and have brought them hither unto my lord.*

SAUL's wearing a bracelet at the time of his death was an ensign of royalty. It might not have been a part of the regalia of the kingdom of Israel, but merely a thing of value which Saul had about him, and which the stranger thought fit to present, with his *crown*, to David; but it seems rather to be mentioned as a royal ornament; and it is certain that it has been used in the East as a badge of power.

D'Herbelot informs us, that when the Khalif Cayem Bemrillah granted the investiture of certain dominions to an Eastern Prince, which his predecessors had possessed, and among the rest the city of Baghdat, this ceremony of investiture was performed by the Khalif's sending him letters patent, a *crown*, a chain, and *bracelets*. It appears, that the children of Israel found one, or more, of these *bracelets* among the spoils of Midian; but they had killed, at the same time, five of their Kings.—Numb. xxxi. 8.—Harmer.

NO. 138.—THE BASTINADO IN THE EAST.

iii. 33. 34. *Died Abner as a fool dieth? Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters.*

It appears, that in the East the hands and feet of criminals were secured when they were brought forth to be punished.

Irwin informs us, that when he was among the Arabs of Upper Egypt, he was treated very ill in the absence of the great Sheikh, who, it appears, was a man of probity and virtue. On the Sheikh's return

he held a court of justice about Irwin's affairs, and those of his companions, when one who had injured them was punished with the bastinado. He says, "the prisoner is placed upright on the ground, with his hands and his feet bound together, while the executioner stands before him and, with a short stick, strikes him, with a smart motion, on the outside of his knees. The pain which arises from these strokes is exquisitely severe; and such as no constitution can support for any continuance." As the Arabs are extremely remarkable for retaining old customs, we have just grounds of believing, that when malefactors in the East were punished by beating, and, perhaps, with death by the sword, their *hands were bound together, and also their feet.*

What is meant about his death is simply this—*Died Abner as a fool?* that is, as a bad man? as that word frequently signifies in the scriptures. Died he as one found in judgment to be a criminal? No! *thy hands, O Abner! were not bound* as a guilty man, neither were *thy feet confined*: on the contrary thou wast treated with honor by him whose business it was to judge thee. As the best of men may fall, so fellst thou, by the sword of treachery, not of justice!—

Harmer.

NO. 139.—DANCING OF THE WISE MEN OF ISRAEL.

vi. 14.—*And David danced before the Lord with all his might.*

Upon this circumstance the Jews grounded a ridiculous custom. In the evening of the day on which they drew water out of the pool of Siloam, those who were esteemed the wise men of Israel, the

elders of the sanhedrim, the rulers of the synagogues, and the doctors of the schools, met in the court of the temple. All the temple music played, and the old men *danced*, while the women in the balconies round the court, and the men on the ground, were spectators. All their sport was to see these venerable fathers of the nation skip and dance, clap their hands and sing. In this manner they spent the greater part of the night, 'till at length two Priests sounded a retreat with trumpets.—*Jennings' Jewish Antiquities*.

Whole bury'd towns support the dancer's heel.

YOUNG.

NO. 140.—MEASURING WITH A LINE.

viii. 2. *And he smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground: even with two lines measured he, to put to death; and with one full line to keep alive.*

This appears to have been the manner of the Eastern Kings towards those they conquered, especially those who had incurred their displeasure, to make all the captives come together into one place, and prostrate themselves upon the ground, that being divided into two parts by *a line*, the conqueror might appoint which part he pleased, either for life or death, which was sometimes determined by casting lots.—*Burder*.

In David's judgment upon the Moabites we see an accomplishment of Balaam's prophecy, *a sceptre shall arise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab.*— Numbers xxiv. 17.

NO. 141.—MANNER OF EATING AT COURTS.

ix. 10.—*Mephibosheth, thy master's son, shall eat bread always at my table.*

The eating at courts is of two kinds; the one pri-

vate, and the other public. The intention of those passages which speak of a right to eat at a royal table, might be to point out a right to a seat there, when the repast was public and solemn.

Sir J. Chardin understood it after this manner.— Thus when David directed his son Solomon to shew kindness to the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and to let them be of those that should eat at his table, he says this must be understood of the majilis;* not of the daily and ordinary repast there. At these majilis many persons have a legal right to a seat, whilst others can claim it only from special grace.

He understands 2 Kings, xxv. 28. 29. after the same manner, as signifying, that Evil-Merodach placed Jehoiakim at the majilis before other princes. Thus, in his coronation of Solyman III. he describes a young captive Tartar Prince as admitted by the King of Persia to his majilis. This notion seems to be confirmed by David's not being expected at the table of Saul till the day of the *new moon*, and his being looked for then.—1 Sam. xx. 24. &c.

Thus *Mephibosheth*, though he was to eat at all public times at the King's table, yet he wanted the produce of his lands for food at other times. It was proper also for David to mention to Ziba the circumstance of his being to eat at all public times as one of his own sons, at the royal table, that Ziba might provide for him in a manner answerable to the dignity conferred upon him.—*Harmer*.

NO. 142.—SHAVING OFF THE BEARD A MARK OF INFAMY.
x. 4. *Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards.*

D'Arvieux says, that among the Arabs it is accounted

* A public Feast.

a mark of great infamy to cut off the beard, because Mahammed never cut off his. Many would prefer death to this kind of treatment. As they think it a grievous punishment to loose the *beard*, they carry things so far as to beg for the sake of it :—“By your *beard*: by the life of your *beard*, do.” So, in like manner, their benedictions are :—“God preserve your blessed *beard*: God pour his blessings on your *beard*;” and when they would express the value of a thing, they say, “It is worth more than his *beard*.” These things show the energy of that thought of Ezek. v. 1. 5. where the inhabitants of Jerusalem are compared to the “hair of his head and beard.” It intimates, that though they had been as dear to God as the beard was to the Jews, yet they should be consumed and destroyed.—*Harmer*.

When Peter the Great attempted to civilize the Russians, and introduce the manners and fashions of the more refined parts of Europe, nothing met with more opposition than the cutting off their *beards*; and many of those who were obliged to comply with this command testified such great veneration for their *beards* as to order that they should be buried with them. Irwin, in his voyage up the Red Sea, says, that at signing a treaty of peace with the Vizier of Yambo, they swore by their *beards*; the most solemn oath they could take. D’Arvieux gives a remarkable instance of an Arab, who having received a wound in his jaw, chose to hazard his life, rather than suffer the surgeon to take off his *beard*. From all these things we see the magnitude of the insult offered by *Hanun* to *David’s servants*.—*Burder*.

NO. 143.—PROVISIONS SENT FROM THE TABLES OF PRINCES.

xi. 8. *Uriah departed out of the King's house, and there followed him a mess of meat from the King.*

It appears, that Eastern Princes, and the Eastern people in general, not only invite their friends to feasts, but that it is their custom to send a portion of the banquet to their relatives, and to such as cannot conveniently attend.

Nehemiah speaks of sending portions to those *for whom nothing was prepared.*—Neh. viii. 10. This has been thought to mean the poor; but as the historian speaks of a national festival, and not of a private feast, it probably means, such as were in a state of mourning; mourning for private calamities being here supposed to take place of rejoicing for public good.

Such as cannot conveniently attend the royal table have provisions sent them. Thus when the Grand Emir found it was inconvenient to Monsieur D'Arvieux to eat with him, he desired him to take his own time for eating, and sent him what he liked from his kitchen, and at the time he chose. Thus when David supposed it would be inconvenient for Uriah to continue at the royal palace, having dismissed him to his own house, *there followed him a mess of meat from the King.*—Harmer.

NO. 144.—CUSTOM OF MOURNING FOR THE DEAD

xii. 20. *Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel.*

It appears, that during the time that David continued to mourn, he was negligent of his apparel; and

that it was not changed. This, according to Goldsmith, was the custom of the Persians, who used to mourn forty days for a relative or a friend, during which time there was a total negligence of dress, and a refusal to shave, or to change their clothes.

Chardin informs us, that it is usual for the Easterns to leave a relation of the person deceased, to weep upon the ground, and mourn 'till the third or fourth day: they then visit him, induce him to eat, lead him to a bath, and cause him to put on new vestments. David's servants, who had seen his bitter anguish while the child was yet alive, were surprised, at his death, to find that the King did not observe the common forms of grief.—*Harmer.*

Maimonides says, that the Jews did not lament infants who died before they were thirty days old; but carried them in their arms to the grave, with one woman and two men to attend them, without saying the usual prayers over them, or the consolations for mourners: but if an infant were above this age when it died, they then carried it on a bier, stood over it in order, and said both the prayers and consolations. If a year old, it was carried out upon a bed.

Josephus tells us, that Herod was carried forth upon a bed, all gilded, set with precious stones, and with a purple covering, curiously wrought.

NO. 145.—PARTY-COLORED GARMENTS, A MARK OF HONOR.

xiii. 18. *She had a garment of divers colors upon her: for with such robes were the King's daughters, that were virgins, apparelled.*

It appears, that those garments were of *divers colors*, not by being made of striped materials, or by

being embroidered, but by having many pieces of different colors sewed together: of which our translators have given an intimation in the margin of Gen. xxxvii. 3. explanatory of Joseph's dress; which seems to have been the same with Tamar's.

Dr. Shaw informs us, that this way of ornamenting their dress still continues in the East. He says, they wear shirts of linen, cotton, or gauze, under their tunics. That the sleeves of these shirts are wide and open, and that "those, particularly of the women, are sometimes of the richest gauze, adorned with different colored ribbands, interchangeably sewed to each other," a garment of this kind would of course be *a garment of divers colors*.—*Harmer*,

NO. 146.—EASTERN CUSTOM OF MOURNING.

xv.30. *And had his head covered, and he went barefoot.*

It appears, that covering the head was used by persons in great distress, or when they were loaded with disgrace and infamy.—Est. vi. 12.—2 Sam. xix, 4.—Ezek. xii. 6. Thus Darius, when he was informed by Tyriotes the eunuch that his Queen was dead, covered his head, and wept a long while. So also when this Prince was in the power of Bessus, who soon after murdered him, he took his leave of Artabazus with *his head covered*. It was common also to put earth or strew dust upon the head, in token of mourning.—2 Samuel, i. 2.—Job ii. 12.

In ancient times the shoes of great and wealthy persons were made of very rich materials, and ornamented with jewels, gold, and silver. When any great calamity befel them, either public or private they not only stripped themselves of these ornaments,

but of their very shoes, and walked *barefoot*. In this manner prisoners taken in war were forced to walk, both for punishment and disgrace.—*Burder*.

NO. 147.—CASTING DUST, AN EASTERN IMPRECACTION.

xvi. 13. *And threw stones at him, and cast dust.*

When the Consul, whom Dr. Pococke attended, entered Cairo, according to an ancient custom of state, a man went before and sprinkled water on the ground to lay the dust. In hot and dry countries this practice must have been very convenient and gratifying. If it were used in Judea before the time of David, it will explain Shimei's behaviour, and give it great energy. He *threw stones and dust* at him who had been honored by having the ground moistened, that the dust might not rise when he walked out. Thus when the Jews clamoured against St. Paul in the temple we read, that *they threw dust into the air*.—Acts, xxii. 23. Chardin has made an observation, which places this matter in a different point of view. He says, “in almost all the East, those who accuse a criminal, or demand justice against him, throw dust upon him; which is as much as to say, he deserves to be put under ground: and it is a common imprecation of the Turks and Persians—*be covered with earth*. The Jews certainly thought that Paul deserved to die; and Shimei might design to declare by what he did, that David was unworthy to live.—*Harmer*.

NO. 148.—PECUNIARY REWARDS, TOKENS OF HONOR.

xviii. 11. *I would have given thee ten shekels of silver,
and a girdle.*

In Europe, the distinction is so great between

honorary and pecuniary rewards, that we can hardly think of blending them together ; but in the East it is not so. Du Tott did many great services to the Turkish empire in the time of their late war with Russia ; and the Turks, he tells us, were disposed to acknowledge them with marks of honor. The First Minister, speaking of the Grand Seignor, said, “his Highness has ordered me to bestow on you this public mark of his esteem,” and at the same time he made a sign to the master of the ceremonies to invest him with the pelisse, while the Hasnadar, or Treasurer, presented him with a purse of two hundred sequins.* Thus Joab would have rewarded an Israelitish soldier with *ten shekels of silver and a girdle*: the girdle would have been an honorary reward ; and the ten shekels, or half-crowns, would have been a pecuniary recompence.

De la Roque informs us, that the common Arabs use a girdle, adorned with leather ; and the women make use of a cord, or strip of cloth, but that some of the Arab girdles are very rich. The girdle which Joab would have given would doubtless have been one suitable to the importance of the service, and of his own dignity. Symon Simeonis says, that the Saracens of Egypt generally girded themselves with a towel, on which they kneeled to say their prayers ; but that the people of figure wore broad silken girdles, like those of the ladies, superbly adorned with gold and silver, in which they extremely pride themselves.

Harmer.

* A sequin is a gold coin, worth about 5s. and 10d. of our money.

NO. 149.—HEAPS OF STONES PERPETUATE REMARKABLE TRANSACTIONS.

xviii, 17: *And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit in the wood, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him,*

Adricomius, in his description of the Holy Land, says, that this monument existed in his days; and that all travellers, as they went by it, threw an additional stone to the heap, in detestation of his rebellion against his father. According to Egmont and Hayman, these heaps are considered by the Easterns merely as monuments of certain events, good as well as bad; and the adding a stone to them by passengers is only intended to prevent the dissipation of these uncemented materials. They say, that all Mahomedans, who go on pilgrimage to Mount Sinai, never fail to visit the place where there is the print of a camel's foot on the rock, supposed to be that of Mahomed; on which account, out of respect, they take with them a stone, which has occasioned a great heap of stones near that spot.

Wortly Montague informs us, that the stone which Moses struck twice is thus distinguished by the Arabs, and engaged his notice as he was travelling in the deserts of Arabia. 'Thus the *heap of stones* raised upon or about Jacob's stone in Mount Gilead, informed every passenger that it was set up in memory of something of consequence; and was thus recommended to the attention of the public at large.—*Harmer.*

NO. 150.—KISSING THE BEARD, A TOKEN OF RESPECT.

xx. 9. *And Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand to kiss him.*

Taking a man by the *beard*, in any other case,

would be deemed a great affront. D'Arvieux, describing the assembling of some petty Arab Princes at an entertainment, tells us, that when the Emirs came together, accompanied by their friends and attendants, "after the usual civilities, caresses, kissings of the beard and of the hand, which every one gave and received according to his dignity, they sat down upon mats." He speaks of women's kissing their husband's beards, and children those of their fathers; and friends reciprocally saluting one another in this manner. If Joab acted agreeably to the customs of those who now live in that country, his kissing him might mean his kissing his beard; and in this stooping posture he could have directed the blow with much greater certainty than if he had held the beard and raised himself to kiss his face.

Dr. Shaw says, that such as are more intimately acquainted, or of equal age and dignity, mutually kiss the hand, the head, or shoulder of each other. Those passages of scripture which speak of *falling on the neck, and kissing a person*, may have a reference to this Eastern way of kissing the shoulder in an embrace.

Harmer.

I. KINGS.

NO. 151.—HORNS USED AS DRINKING VESSELS.

i. 39. *And Zadok the Priest took an horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon.*

SIR J. Chardin informs us, that it is customary in Iberia, Colchis, and the adjacent country, where the arts are little practised, to keep liquors in *horns*, and to drink out of them.

They were doubtless originally the hollow horns of animals that were used ; and art was afterwards employed to hollow them more perfectly. In the days of David, those vessels might have been shaped like horns, though made of silver and gold ; especially the vessels kept in the sanctuary. Chardin says, that the using horns for drinking-cups has long been a custom among the Eastern people. Some have the horns of the rhinoceros, and some of the deer ; but the common sort of horns were those of oxen and of sheep. Those horns were sometimes tipped with gold, and embellished with precious stones.

The horn of Ulphus, kept at York, has a chain fastened to it in two places, by which it might be hung up. It is reasonable to believe that the Eastern horns had the same convenience, which may account for the Prophets supposing that drinking vessels were hung up. Isa. xxii. 24. These horns were of different sizes. A common horn, according to Chardin, is about eight inches high, and two inches broad at the top. That at York appears to be twenty-seven inches high, and about five inches broad at the top.—*Harmer.*

NO. 152.—EXECUTIONS, PROMPT AND ARBITRARY.

ii. 25. *And King Solomon sent by the hand of Beniah the son of Jehoiada, and he fell upon him that he died.*

Those who are used to slowness of procedure with regard to supposed criminals, who expect that a number of independent persons should determine their fate, and that their execution should be of the most public nature, are much surprized, and pained,

in reading the very different conduct of the Orientals.—Thevenot gives us to understand, that among the Turks, when the enemies of a great man have gained sufficient influence over the Prince to procure a warrant for his death, a Capidgi* is sent to him, who shews him the order he has to carry back his head: the other takes the Grand Seignor's order, kisses it, puts it on his head in sign of respect, and then, having performed his ablution, and said his prayers, freely gives up his head: the Capidgi, having strangled him, cuts off his head, and brings it to Constantinople.

Chardin gives a similar account of the silent, hasty, and unobstructed manner of putting the great men of Persia to death. Much the same method, it seems, was used by the ancient Jewish Princes. Benaiah was the Capidgi, to use the Turkish term, who was sent by Solomon to put Adonijah, a Prince of the blood, to death. Thus John the Baptist was *beheaded in prison*, and his head was carried to the court of Herod the Tetrarch.—*Harmer.*

NO. 153.—ALTARS A PLACE OF SECURITY.

ii, 28. *And Joab fled unto the tabernacle of the Lord, and caught hold of the horns of the altar.*

Figures of Egyptian altars have been dug out of the ruins of Herculaneum, which were probably used in honour of Isis. Some of the ancient altars have a rising at each of the four corners, which appears to be the *horns of the altar* so often alluded to in scripture. Those horns were built perpendicularly, a cubit high, in the form of a pyramid, and then pointed outward, like the top of a horn. To these the Psalmist

*The name of the officer who executes these orders.

alludes, Psalm cxviii. 27. *Bind the sacrifice with cords unto the horns of the altar.*—*Calmet.*

From a variety of scripture passages it appears that it was customary to fly to the *altar* as a place of safety. This was practised by the Jews and other nations. It prevailed also among the Greeks. Of the altar of Jupiter Hercaeus, it is said,

————— fly
To Jove's inviolable altar nigh.

POPE.

The altar mentioned by Virgil was of the same nature to which Priam fled at the taking of Troy.—*Burder.*

NO. 154.—TAXES PAID IN KIND.

iv. 7. *And Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel, who provided victuals for the King and his household.*

Chardin says, “the revenues of Princes in the East are paid in the fruits and productions of the earth; and there are no other taxes upon the peasants.” From this information we may suppose Solomon’s *twelve officers* to be his general receivers, who furnished food for all that belonged to the King. Silver, gold, horses, armour, precious vestments, and other things of value, came to him as a kind of tribute from surrounding Princes. The horses and armour appear to have been distributed among the most populous towns, which were to find horsemen, and people to drive chariots, to such a number, when called for; and out of the silver, and other precious things, he made presents to those who distinguished themselves in his service.—1 Kings, x. 15. 27.

Chardin supposes the telling the flocks—Jer. xxxiii. 13. was for the purpose of paying tribute, “it being

the custom in the East to count the flocks, in order to take a third of the increase of the young ones for the King."—*Harmer.*

NO. 155.—EASTERN PLANTATIONS.

iv. 25. *And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree.*

Plantations of trees about houses are very useful in hot countries, and give an agreeable coolness. Sir Thomas Row's chaplain, when speaking of the country of the Great Mogul, says, "it is their manner, in many places, to plant, about and amongst their buildings, trees which grow high and broad, the shadow whereof keeps their houses far more cool: this I observed in a special manner when we were ready to enter Amadavar; for it appeared to us as if we had been entering a wood, rather than a city." It appears that this method anciently prevailed in Judea, and that *vines and fig-trees* were commonly used in that country, under which they might sit in the open air, and yet in the cool. These trees furnished two great articles of food for their consumption; and the cuttings of their vines were useful to them for fuel.

Baron De Tott says, that the Egyptian villages are shaded after a similar manner. "Wherever the inundation can reach, the habitations are erected on little hills, raised for that purpose, which serve for the common foundation of all the houses which stand together; and which are contrived to take up as little room as possible, that they may save all the ground they can for cultivation. Every village has a small wood of palm-trees near it, the property of which is common: these supply the inhabitants with

dates for their consumption, and leaves for fabrication of baskets, mats, and other things of that kind. Little causeways, raised in like manner above the inundation, preserve a communication during the time it lasts." Norden speaks of *vine* arbors as common in the Egyptian gardens.—*Harmer.*

NO. 156.—DESCRIPTION OF THE TARGET, OR SHIELD.

x. 16. *King Solomon made two hundred targets of beaten gold.*

The middle part of the *target* projected in a sharpish point, as did some of the shields afterwards used by the Greeks and Romans: and we are informed by writers on their military affairs, that this pointed protuberance was of great service to them, not only in repelling or glancing off missive weapons, but in bearing down their enemies; whence Martial has this allusion—

In crowds his pointed boss will all repel.

Burder.

NO. 157.—MAGNIFICENCE OF EASTERN THRONES.

x. 18. *The King made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with the best gold.*

In subsequent ages we read of very majestic *thrones*. Atheneus says, that the *throne* of the Parthian Kings was of *gold*, encompassed with four golden pillars, beset with precious stones. The Persian Kings sat in judgment under a golden vine, the clusters of whose grapes were composed of several sorts of precious stones.

Tavernier informs us, that the Great Mogul has seven thrones, some set all over with diamonds; others with rubies, emeralds, and pearls. The largest throne

is erected in the hall of the first court of the palace : it is in form like one of our field-beds, six feet long and four broad. He adds, “ I counted about a hundred and eight pale rubies in collets about that throne, the least whereof weighed a hundred carats : but there are some that weigh two hundred. Emeralds I counted about a hundred and forty, that weighed, some three score, some thirty carats.”

The under part of the canopy is embroidered with pearls and diamonds, with a fringe of pearls round the edge. Upon the top of the canopy, which is made like an arch, with four panes, stands a peacock with his tail spread, consisting entirely of sapphires and other proper-coloured stones : the body is of beaten gold, engraved with numerous jewels, and a great ruby adorns his breast, to which hangs a pearl that weighs fifty carats. On each side of the peacock stand two nosegays, as high as the bird, consisting of various sorts of flowers, all of beaten gold enamelled. The twelve pillars that uphold the canopy are set round with rows of pearl, that weigh from six to ten carats apiece. At the distance of four feet, on each side of the throne, are placed two umbrellas, the handles of which are about eight feet high, covered with diamonds ; the umbrellas themselves being of crimson velvet, embroidered and fringed with pearl. This is the famous throne which Timur began, and Shah Johan finished ; and it is reported to have cost a hundred and sixty millions, and five hundred thousand livres of our money.—*Burder.*

NO. 158.—PROPHETS SECLUDED FROM A SECULAR LIFE.

xviii. 19. *The Prophets of Baal four hundred and*

fifty, and the Prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table.

It appears, that the *Prophets* of the *idols*, as well as those of *Jehovah*, lived a life of abstraction from civil employments, and wholly spent their time in the service of the idol. The Prophets of God lived in society—1 Sam. xix. 20. 24. and were trained up from early life in that way which was supposed to invite the influences of the prophetic spirit—retirement from the world, reading, meditation, prayer, and singing the divine praises, which last, as well as the foretelling of future events, was itself honored with the name of prophesying.—1 Chron. xxv. 1.

Zechariah supposes, that the false Prophet, to clear himself from the charge of having been the Prophet of an idol, would urge, *I am no Prophet; I am a husbandman, for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth.*—Zach. xiii. 5. Now had not the Idol-prophets lived in a manner somewhat resembling the Prophets of the Lord, this allegation would have been altogether impertinent.

As it respects their eating at *Jezebel's table*, we are not to understand that they ate at the royal table, where Jezebel herself took her refreshment, though it is not unusual in the East for several hundred to eat in the palaces of the Princes; yet it could never be thought necessary by Jezebel to have *four hundred* chaplains in waiting at once at court. They, probably, lived in a kind of collegiate way; ate at a common table in or near the temple of the idol which they served; and were supported at Jezebel's expence.

Their business was, probably, to sing the praises of the idols they worshipped; to watch from time to

time in their temples, under the pretence of receiving oracular answers to the enquiries of those who came to consult them.—2 Kings, i. 2.; and to teach the worshippers in what form of words to address their deity.—*Harmer.*

NO. 159.—THE WORSHIP OF BAAL.

xviii. 26. *And they leaped upon the altar which was made.*

Baal, whose idolatrous worship is here referred to, was the same as Apollo, or the sun. Callimachus has given us a remarkable instance of the universal veneration which was paid by the ancient Pagans at his altar in the temple of Delos. Amongst other ceremonies in the worship of this idol, it was customary to run round his altar, to strike it with a whip, and, with their hands or arms bound behind them, to bite the olive. Their running round the altar signified an annual rotation of the sun. Striking the altar with a whip, cutting themselves with knives and lancets, and crying aloud to their deity, were symbolical actions, denoting their desire that he would shew forth his power, especially upon the sacrifice before him. By bending their arms behind them, and taking the sacred olive into their mouths, they signified, that not from their own arm or power, which was bound, but from his, whose altar they surrounded, they expected to receive that peace, whereof the olive was always a symbol.—Gen. viii. 11.

There are some evident allusions to these idolatrous practices, in the Old Testament; and the Jews are severely reprimanded by the Prophets for following such absurd and wicked ceremonies. *Thus saith the*

Lord concerning the Prophets that make my people err, that bite with their teeth, and cry peace.—Micah iii. 5. Respecting Ashdod, the Prophet says, I will take away his blood out of his mouth, and his abominations from between his teeth.—Zech. ix. 7.—Burder.

NO. 160.—POSTURE OF DEVOTION IN THE EAST.

xviii. 42. *Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees.*

Sir J. Chardin informs us, that the devout posture of some of the people of the Levant resembles the posture of Elijah just before the descent of the rain. He says, that the dervises, especially those of the Indies, put themselves into this posture, in order to meditate and to repose themselves. They tie their knees against their belly with their girdle, and lay their heads on the top of them; which, they say, is the best posture for recollection.—*Harmer.*

NO. 161.—CONDUCT OF EASTERN FOOTMEN.

xviii. 46. *The hand of the Lord was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab.*

Hanway tells us, that Nadir Shah,* when he removed his camp, was preceded by his running footmen, and those by his chanters, who were nine hundred in number, and frequently chanted moral sentences, and encomiums on the Shah; occasionally proclaiming his victories also. A similar practice existed among the inhabitants of Mount Libanus in the time of Pope Clement VIII. Dandini, the Pope's Nuncio to the Maronites, says, "we were always accompanied with the better sort of people, who

* Kouli Khan, as they commonly called him.

walked on foot before our mules, and, out of the respect they bore to the Pope, and in honor to us, they would sing certain songs and spiritual airs as they marched before the Patriarch and other persons of quality." According to this account persons of figure went before them in procession, with songs.

We are willing to suppose, that *Elijah's* running before *Ahab's* chariot to the gates of Jezreel was not unworthy his prophetic character. If *Ahab* had chanters, we should suppose the Prophet to be at their head, to direct them in singing praise to him that was giving them rain; and to intermingle due encomiums on the Prince that had permitted the extermination of the Priests of Baal.—2 Chron. xx. 21. 22. The expression—*the hand of the Lord was on Elijah* may be understood, of God's stirring him up to the composing and singing of some proper hymns on this occasion, more than the enabling him to run with greater swiftness than his age would otherwise have permitted.—*Harmer.*

NO. 162.—REVERENCE IN DIVINE WORSHIP.

xix. 13. *And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle.*

The Jews accounted it a token of reverence to have their feet bare in public worship, and to have their heads covered. This was, accordingly, the practice not of the priests only, but of the people also; and the latter practice remains to this day. Thus, on the Divine appearance to Moses in the bush, it is said, *he hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.*—Ex. iii. 6.: and on the extraordinary manifestation of the divine presence to *Elijah*, *he wrapped*

his face in his mantle. On the same account, perhaps, the angels were represented in vision to Isaiah as covering their faces with their wings in the presence of Jehovah.—Isa. vi. 2.

The ancient Romans performed their sacred rites with a covering on their heads.—

Our way we bend
To Pallas, and the sacred hill ascend:
There prostrate to the fierce virago pray,
Whose temple was the land-mark of our way.
Each with a Phrygian mantle veil'd his head.

VIRGIL.

The Grecians, on the contrary, performed their sacred rites bare headed. St. Paul, therefore, writing to the Corinthians, who were Greeks, says, *every man praying or prophesying with his head covered, dishonoreth his head.*—1 Cor. xi. 4.—*Burder.*

NO. 163.—KISSING AN IDOL, AN ACT OF WORSHIP.

xix. 18. *All the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.*

Bowing the knee was an act of worship, and so was kissing the idol. This was done two ways; either by applying their mouth immediately to the image, or kissing their hand before the image, and then stretching it out, and, as it were, throwing the kiss to it.—*Burder.*

Pitt says, that the Mahomedans, when they cannot kiss the hand of a superior, kiss their own, and put it to their foreheads; and they venerate an unseen Being, whom they cannot touch, in much the same manner. After this sort, it appears, the ancient idolaters worshipped beings which they could not touch. Job alludes to this—chap. xxx. v. 26. 27.—

If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness : and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand : this, without doubt, would have been an idolatrous action.—

Harmer.

Idolater, more gross than ever kiss'd
The lifted hand to *Luna*, or pour'd out
The blood to *Jove*! —————

YOUNG.

NO. 164.—A DESCRIPTION OF HUMILIATION.

xx. 32. *They girded sackcloth on their loins, and put ropes on their heads, and came to the King of Israel.*

The approaching persons with a sword hanging to the neck is, in the East, thought to be an act of great humility and submission. William of Tyre, describing the great solemnity and humiliation with which the Governor of Egypt, under the Khaliph of that country, appeared before his master, tells us, he prostrated himself on the ground thrice, with his sword hanging to his neck, which at the third prostration he took off and laid down.

Thevenot, in his account of the taking of Bagdat by the Turks, informs us, through the medium of an officer, that when the besieged party solicited quarter, the principal officer of the Governor of Bagdat went to the Grand Visier with a scarf about his neck, and his sword wreathed in it, begging both in his own and in his master's name, *aman*, that is to say, pardon and mercy ; and having obtained it, the Governor came and was introduced to the Grand Seignior.

The ropes about the necks of Benhadad's servants probably suspended their swords; if the custom of

later times may be thought to be explanatory of those of earlier date, which in the East is frequently the case.—*Harmer.*

They girded sackcloth on their loins, as mourners; and put ropes on their heads, as condemned criminals going to execution, acknowledging that they ought to be hanged for their conduct.—Henry.

NO. 165.—EASTERN METHOD OF SEALING:

xxi. 8. *She wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal.*

Seals are of very ancient invention: thus Judah had his seal, and left it as a pledge with Tamar. The ancient Hebrews wore their seals or signets in rings on their fingers, or in bracelets on their arms. Sealing-rings are said to have been invented by the Lacedemonians; who, not content to shut their chests, armouries, &c. with keys, added a seal also. Letters and contracts were first tied up with a string; then the wax was applied to the knot, and the seal impressed upon it.

Pococke says, that in Egypt they make the impression of their name with their seal, generally of cornelian, which they wear on their finger, and which is blacked when they have occasion to seal with it. Hanway says, that the Persian ink serves, not only for writing, but for subscribing with their seal; and adds, that many of the Persians in high office cannot write. In their rings they wear agates, which serve for a seal, on which their name is frequently engraved, and some verse from the Koran.

Pliny says, that seals were scarcely used at the time of the Trojan war: the method of shutting up letters

was by curious knots; which invention was particularly honored, as in the instance of the Gordian knot. He says, that in his time no seals were used, but in the Roman Empire; but at Rome testaments were null without the testator's seal, and the seals of seven witnesses.—*Burder.*

NO. 166.—THE RAPACITY OF DOGS IN THE EAST.

xxi. 23. *The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.*

Though *dogs* are not suffered in the houses in the East, and people are very careful to avoid them, lest they should be polluted by touching them, yet there are great numbers of them in their streets. Le Bruin says, they do not belong to particular persons, nor are they regularly fed, but get their food as they can. It is considered right, however, to take some care of them; and charitable people frequently give money to butchers and bakers, to feed them; and some leave legacies for the same purpose. Dogs seem to have been looked upon by the Jews in a disagreeable light;* yet they had them in considerable numbers in their cities. They were not shut up in their houses or courts, but seem to have been forced to seek their food where they could find it.—*Psalm lix. 6. &c.*

Harmer.

Mr. Bruce says, that at Gondar the bodies of those killed by the sword were hewn to pieces and scattered about the streets, being denied burial. “ I was miserable, and almost driven to despair, at seeing my hunting-dogs twice let loose, by the carelessness of my servants bringing into the court-yard the heads and arms

* 1 Sam. xvii. 43.—2 Kings, viii. 13.

of slaughtered men, which I could no way prevent, but by the destruction of the dogs themselves." He also adds, that upon the King's asking the reason of his dejected and sickly appearance, he informed him that it was occasioned by the execution of three men which he had lately seen; because the hyænas, allured into the streets by the quantity of carrion, would not let him pass by night in safety from the palace; and because the dogs fled into his house, to eat pieces of human carcases at their leisure.

This illustrates the readiness of the dogs to lick the blood of Ahab—1 Kings, xxii. 38.; and to eat the flesh of Jezebel—2 Kings, ix. 36. *I will appoint over them the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear.*—Jer. xv. 3.—*Burder.*

NO. 167.—HIGH PLACES CHOSEN FOR DEVOTION.

xxii. 43. *The people offered and burnt incense yet in the high places.*

It appears, that in days of old men frequently worshipped upon *hills* and upon the tops of *high mountains*; imagining that they thereby obtained a nearer communication with Heaven, the seat of the gods. Strabo informs us, that the Persians always performed their worship upon hills. Some nations, instead of an image, worshipped the hill as the deity. In Japan most of their temples are at this day upon eminences; and often upon the ascent of high mountains, commanding fine views, with groves and rivulets of clear water; for they say, that the gods are extremely delighted with such high and pleasant spots.

Holwell says, that this practice in early time was almost universal; and every mountain was esteemed

holy. The people who prosecuted this method of worship enjoyed a soothing infatuation, which flattered the gloom of superstition. The eminences to which they retired were lonely and silent ; and seemed to be happily circumstanced for contemplation and prayer. They who frequented them were raised above the lower world ; and fancied that they were brought into the vicinity of the powers of the air, and of the deity, who resided in the higher regions. But the chief excellence for which they were frequented was, that they were looked upon as the peculiar places where God delivered his oracles.

Both at Athens and Rome the most sacred temples stood in the most eminent part of the city. Jupiter, in Homer, commends Hector, for the many sacrifices which he had offered upon the top of Ida : and Balak, King of Moab, carried Balaam to the top of a mountain, to sacrifice to the gods, and curse Israel from thence.—Numb. xxii. 41.—*Burder.*

II. KINGS.

NO. 168.—FLIES VERY TROUBLESOME IN JUDEA.

i. 2. *Enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron, whether I shall recover of this disease.*

WE may be surprised to find that the driving away of flies should be thought, by the inhabitants of the country about Ekron, to be so important, that they should give a name to the idol they worshipped expressive of that property*; and more especially when this was not the only quality ascribed to him;

* Baalzebub (lord of the fly). }

but it was supposed that the powers of prediction also belonged to him : but possibly a passage in Vini-sauf may lessen this astonishment.

Speaking of the army under our Richard I. a little before he left the Holy Land, and describing them as marching not far from the sea-coast, and near to Hebron, Vinisauf says, “the army stopping awhile here, rejoicing in the hope of speedily setting out for Jerusalem, were assailed by a most minute kind of fly, flying about like sparks, which they called cincinellæ. With these the whole neighbouring region was filled. These most wretchedly infested the pilgrims ; piercing, with great smartness, their hands, necks, and faces : a most violent burning tumour followed the punctures made by them, so that all that were stung looked like lepers.”

From these things we can no longer wonder that the poor Heathen, who lived in and about *Ekron*, should derive much consolation from the supposed powers of the idol they worshipped, to drive away the cincinellæ of their country.—*Harmer.*

NO. 169.—WATER POURED UPON THE HANDS.

iii. 11. *Here is Elisha, the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah.*

This service, which Elisha performed for Elijah, is not a solitary service. Pitts says, that the table being removed, before they rise from the ground whereon they sit, a servant, who waits on them with a cup of water to give them drink, steps into the middle with a basin, or copper pot, of water, somewhat like a coffee-pot, and a little soap, and lets the water run upon their hands, one after another, in order, as they sit.

Hanway, speaking of a Persian supper, says, “ Supper, being now brought in, a servant presented a basin of water, and a napkin hung over his shoulders, he went to every one in the company, and poured water on their hands to wash.”—*Burder.*

NO. 170.—WIND OFTEN PRECEDES RAIN IN THE EAST.

iii. 17. *Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water.*

Rain in the East is often preceded by a squall of wind. The Editor of the Ruins of Palmyra tells us, that they seldom have rain, except at the equinoxes; and that nothing could be more serene than the sky all the time he was there, except one afternoon, when there was a small shower, preceded by a whirlwind, which took up such quantities of sand from the desert as quite darkened the sky.

The circumstance of the wind taking up such a quantity of sand as to darken the sky may serve to explain 1 Kings, xviii. 45—*the Heaven was black with clouds and wind.* The winds prognosticating rain is also referred to Prov. xxv. 14.—*whoso boasteth himself of a false gift, pretending to give something valuable, and disappointing the expectation, is like clouds and wind without rain.*—*Harmer.*

NO. 171.—TREES DESTROYED BY ENEMIES.

iii. 19. *And shall fell every good tree.*

As the people of these countries endeavoured to distress those that came to besiege them by concealing their waters, so those, on the other hand, frequently cut down the most valuable trees of their enemies. This Moses forbade to be done in Canaan; but it

appears that the Moabites were to be punished after this sort.

Hasselquist informs us, that the Arabs of the Holy Land still make war after this manner on each other; burning the corn, cutting down the olive-trees, carrying off the sheep, and doing one another all possible damage: excepting that these Arabian villagers never touch one another's lives.

The Turks, in like manner, when they would distress the poor Maronite Christians, cut down their mulberry-trees, which are of great importance to them for feeding their silk-worms, silk being one of the greatest articles their country affords. Dr. Pococke tells us, that when he visited Mount Lebanon, he saw a great number of young mulberry-trees, which had been cut down by a Pasha, who had some demands upon them, which they could not answer.—

Harmer.

NO. 172.—MANNER OF RIDING UPON ASSES.

iv. 24. *Then she saddled an ass, and said to her servant, drive, and go forward.*

The method of travelling in the East is widely different from that of travelling among us. To see a person mounted, and attended by a servant on foot, would appear odd to us; and it would be still much more so to see that servant driving the beast before him, or goading it along: yet these are Eastern modes.

Dr. Pococke, in his account of Egypt, tells us, that there a man always leads the lady's ass: and if she has a servant he goes on one side; but the ass-driver follows the man, goads on the beast, and when he is to turn directs his head with a pole.

The Shunamite, when she went to the Prophet, did not desire so much attendance, only requested her husband to send her an ass and its driver; to whom she said, *drive and go forward*. This account of Dr. Pococke will also explain why she did not desire two asses, one for herself, and the other for the servant that attended her. Solomon might refer to the same when he says, *I have seen servants upon horses, and Princes walking as servants upon the earth*.—Ecc. x. 7.—*Harmer.*

The most ancient saddles were, probably, nothing more than a rug girded to the beast; and as for stirrups, they had none.

NO. 173.—PLOTS OF WARRIORS.

vii. 12. *They know that we are hungry, therefore are they gone out of the camp, to hide themselves in the field, saying, when they come out of the city we shall catch them alive, and get into the city.*

In the history of the revolt of Ali Bey, we have an account of a transaction very similar to the stratagem supposed to have been practised by the Syrians. The Pasha of Sham* having marched near to the sea of Tiberias, found Sheik Daher encamped there: but the Sheik deferring the engagement 'till the next morning, during the night divided his army into three parts, and left the camp with great fires, all sorts of provisions, and a large quantity of spirituous liquors, giving strict orders not to hinder the enemy from taking possession of the camp, but to come down and attack them just before dawn of day. In the middle of the night the Pasha of Sham thought to surprise Sheik Daher, and marched in silence to the camp, which to

* Damascus.

his great astonishment he found entirely abandoned, and thought the Sheik had fled with so much precipitation that he could not carry off the baggage and stores. The Pasha thought proper to stop in the camp to refresh his soldiers: they soon fell to plunder; and drank so freely of the liquors, that, overcome with the fatigues of the day's march, and the fumes of the spirits, it was not long ere they were in a sound sleep. At that time Sheik Sleby and Sheik Crime, who were watching the enemy, came silently to the camp; and Sheik Dahir, having repassed the sea of Tiberias, meeting them, they all rushed into the camp and fell on the confused and sleeping enemy, eight thousand of whom they slew on the spot; and the Pasha, with the remainder of his troops, fled with much difficulty to Sham, leaving all their baggage behind them.—*Harmer.*

NO. 174.—METHOD OF DISHONORING RELIGIOUS HOUSES.

x. 27. *And they brake down the image of Baal, and brake down the house of Baal, and made it a draught-house unto this day.*

The dishonoring places which had been treated with veneration, by making use of them for the most disgraceful discharges of animal nature, was an ancient oriental way of expressing dislike, and still continues to be used. After this manner it was that *Jehu* treated the temple of *Baal*. Every one will suppose what a *draught-house* means, especially if he recollect the language of our Lord; *Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth, goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?*—*Mat. xv. 17.*

Sir J. Chardin observes, somewhere in his M. S.

that the Eastern people are more exquisite in taking vengeance than those in the West. We strike off the heads of those images which have been superstitiously abused ; and pull down or deface buildings which we detest: the stone coffin of a Prince, whose memory was execrated, has been used as a watering-trough for horses; but I do not remember that any sacred place among us has ever been designedly made a draught-house. Chardin says, that Abbas the Great, King of Persia, having conquered Bagdad, treated the tomb of Hanifah, one of the fathers of the church among the Turks, after a similar manner.*—Harmer.

NO. 175.—JOY EXPRESSED BY CLAPPING OF HANDS.

xi. 12. *And they clapped their hands, and said, God save the King.*

The way by which females in the East express their joy is by gently applying one of their *hands* to their mouth. This custom appears to be very ancient, and seems to be referred to in several places of scripture. Pitts, describing the joy with which the leaders of the sacred caravans are received in the several towns of Barbary through which they pass, says, “this Emir Haggi, into whatever town he comes, is received with a great deal of joy; because he is going about so religious a work. He is attended with flags and kettle-drums, whilst loud acclamations rend the skies. The women get upon the tops of the houses to view the parade, where they keep striking their four fingers on their lips as fast as they can, making a joyful noise all the while.”

* Both Persians and Turks are Mahomedans, but of different sects; and there are as mortal feuds betwixt them, on that account, as there were anciently between the Jews and the Samaritans.

The sacred writers suppose two different methods of expressing joy, by a quick motion of the hand, which is lost in our translation; and it appears that *clapping the hands*, in the plural, is a very distinct thing from clapping the hand, in the singular. The former of these methods obtained anciently, as an expression of malignant joy.—*All that pass by clap their hands at thee; they hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem.*—Lam. ii. 15. So Job, describing the destruction of the wicked, says, *Men shall clap their hands at him, and shall hiss him out of his place*—Job. xxvii. 23; but other words, translated clapping the hands, signify the applying of only one hand somewhere with softness, in testimony of a joy of a more agreeable kind. Thus in 2 Kings, xi. 12. and Psalm xlviij. 1. it should be rendered in the singular—*clap your hand*; and may allude to such an application of the hand to the mouth as has been recited.—*Harmer.*

NO. 176.—MONEY SEALED UP IN BAGS.

xii. 10. *They put up in bags, and told the money that was found in the house of the Lord.*

The *money* that is collected in the treasuries of Eastern Princes is *told up* in certain equal sums, put into *bags*, and sealed. Chardin says, that it is the custom of Persia always to seal up bags of money; and the money of the King's treasure is not told, but is received in bags, sealed up.

These bags, I presume, are what are called purses in other parts of the Levant. Maillet says, that each of these purses contains money to the value of fifteen hundred livres, or five hundred crowns. In the East,

at the present time, a bag of money passes currently from hand to hand, under the authority of a banker's seal, without any examination of its contents. Job seems to allude to this custom, when he says, *my transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou sewest up mine iniquity*—chap. xiv. ver. 17. He probably considered his offences to be numerous before the Lord, and that none of them were suffered to be lost through inattention.—*Harmer.*

NO. 177.—DESCRIPTION OF THE SIMOQM.

xix. 7. *Behold I will send a blast upon him.*

The destruction of Sennacherib and his army appears to have been effected by that pestilential wind called the simoom. Mr. Bruce thus speaks of it: “we had no sooner got into the plains than we felt great symptoms of the simoom; and about a quarter before twelve, our prisoner, and then Idris, called out, ‘the simoom! the simoom!’ My curiosity would not suffer me to fall down without looking behind me: about due south I saw the colored haze as before: it seemed now to be rather less compressed, and to have with it a shade of blue; the edges of it were not defined as those of the former, but like a very thin smoke, with about a yard in the middle tinged with those colors. We all fell upon our faces, and the simoom passed, with a gentle ruffling wind. It continued to blow in this manner ’till near three o’clock. We were all taken ill that night, and had scarcely strength left us to load the camels and to arrange the baggage.” In another place Mr. Bruce describes it as producing a desperate kind of indifference about life—that it brought upon him a degree of cowardice and languor,

which he struggled with in vain—and that it completely exhausted his strength. From the account of various travellers it appears to have been almost instantaneously fatal and putrifying. It was consequently a fit agent to be employed in desolating the army of Sennacherib. The destroying angel which we read of in Isaiah xxxvii. 36. is, at the seventh verse expressly called *a blast or wind*.

It appears, that these hot pestilential winds amazingly dry up the water of their *girbahs*. The camels give notice of its approach by making a noise, and burying their mouths and nostrils in the sand. To imitate the camels is the best way to escape suffocation.

Calmet.

I. CHRONICLES.

NO. 178.—THE ANCIENT MANNER OF SAYING AMEN.

xvi. 36. *And all the people said, Amen.*

THIS practice is of very great antiquity, and was in general use with the Jews in early times, and retained by them after the captivity.—Neh. viii. 6. The Jewish Doctors give three rules for pronouncing the word *amen*. 1. That it be not pronounced with too much haste and rapidity, but with a grave and distinct voice. 2. That it be not louder than the tone of him that blessed. 3. It was to be expressed in faith, with a certain persuasion that God would hear their prayer and bless them.

It appears that this custom prevailed also in the Christian church. Hence St. Paul urges the necessity of praying in a language easy to be understood,

that he that occupieth the room of the unlearned may say Amen.—1 Cor. xiv. 16. Gill informs us, that the primitive Christians used, at the close of the Lord's supper, to say *Amen*; and thinks it probable that this custom prevailed in the Corinthian church.—

Burder.

Devotion, when lukewarm is undevout;
But when it glows, its heat is struck to Heav'n;
To human hearts her golden harps are strung,
High Heav'n's orchestra chants *amen* to man.

Young.

NO. 179.—DISQUALIFICATIONS OF BLOOD-SHEDDING.

xxii. 3. *Thou shalt not build an house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth.*

The custom which prohibits persons polluted with *blood* to perform any offices of divine worship, before they were purified, is so ancient and universal that it may almost be esteemed a precept of natural religion, tending to inspire an uncommon dread and horror of bloodshed. In the case of David, it amounted to a disqualification, as it respected the building of the temple: and with regard to some of the Israelites it was the cause of the rejection of their prayers.—Isa. i. 15. The Greeks were influenced by the same principle. Euripides represents Iphigenia as arguing, that it was impossible for human sacrifices to be acceptable to the gods, since they do not permit any defiled with *blood*, or even polluted with the touch of a dead body, to come near their altars. Homer makes Hector say,

Ill fits it me, with human gore distained,
To the pure skies these horrid hands to raise,
Or offer Heav'n's great sire polluted praise.

M 2

Burder.

NO. 180.—MANNER OF DISPOSING OF SPOILS.

xxvi. 27. Out of the spoils won in battle did they dedicate to maintain the house of the Lord.

According to the law of Moses, the booty was to be divided equally, between those who were in the battle, and those who were in the camp, whatever disparity there might be in the number of each party. The law farther requires, that out of that part of the spoils which was assigned to the fighting men the Lord's share should be taken; and for every five hundred men, oxen, sheep, &c. they were to take one for the High Priest, as being the Lord's *first fruits*; and out of the other moiety belonging to the children of Israel, they were to give for every fifty men, oxen, sheep, &c. one to the Levites. Amongst the Greeks and Romans the plunder was brought together into one common stock, and divided afterwards amongst the officers and soldiers, paying some respect to their rank in the distribution. Sometimes the soldiers made a reserve of the chief part of the booty, to present, by way of compliment, to their respective Generals. The gods were always remembered: and the Priests had sufficient influence to procure them an handsome offering, and other acceptable presents.—*Wilson.*

NO. 181.—BURNING PERFUMES IN HONOR OF THE DEAD.

xvi. 14. And they made a very great burning for him.

THE Greeks and Romans burnt their dead, throwing frankincense, myrrh, cassia, and other fra-

grant things, into the fire ; and these were used in such vast quantities, that Pliny represents it as a piece of profaneness to bestow such heaps of frankincense on a dead body, when they offered it to their gods by crumbs. Patrick says, that the Israelites had no such custom ; but probably from the ancient Egyptians they had adopted the practice of *burning* many spices at their funerals.—2 Chron. xxi. 19.—Jer. xxxiv. 5.—Kimchi says, that they burnt the bed on which they lay, and other household stuff, that none might have the honor to use them when they were gone.—*Burder.*

When De la Valle visited the Holy Land, his curiosity led him to Hebron, a noted place for Mahomedan pilgrimages. He informs us, that the cave of Machpelah, in which Abraham and the other Patriarchs, with their wives, are deposited, is covered with a considerable building, which was once a Christian church, but is now turned into a mosque. Neither Jews nor Christians are permitted to enter either into the cave or into the mosque built over it ; the nearest access with which they are indulged is certain holes made in the wall leading to a sacred repository.—“There we Christians,” he says, “said our prayers, and the Jews poured out their divers odoriferous things : there they burnt perfumes, sweet-scented wood, and wax-candles.”—*Harmer.*

NO. 182.—PUNISHMENT OF DEATH BY CASTING FROM A
ROCK.

xxv. 12. *And cast them down from the top of the rock, that they all were broken in pieces.*

This mode of punishment was practised by the Greeks and Romans, as well as the Jews. In Greece

according to the Delphian law, such as were guilty of sacrilege were led to a *rock*, and *cast headlong down*. Livy says, that the Romans inflicted it on various malefactors, by casting them down from the Tarpein rock. Mr. Pitts, in his account of the Mahomedans, informs us, that in Turkey, at a place called Constantine, a town situated at the top of a great rock, the usual way of executing great criminals is by *pushing them off the cliff*.—*Burder*.

NO. 183.—INTERMENT ACCORDING TO CHARACTER.

xxviii. 27. *And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city, even in Jerusalem; but they brought him not into the sepulchres of the Kings of Israel.*

The Israelites were accustomed to honor, in a peculiar manner, the memory of those Kings who had reigned over them uprightly. On the contrary, some marks of disgrace followed those Monarchs who left the world under the disapprobation of their people. The proper place of interment was in *Jerusalem*; hence, when a Ruler was buried in this honorable receptacle, it was said that he was *gathered to his fathers*. Several instances occur, in which they were not interred with their predecessors, but in some other place in *Jerusalem*. Thus it was with Ahaz; who, though brought into the city, was not buried *in the sepulchre of the Kings of Israel*. In some other cases, perhaps to mark out a greater degree of censure, they were taken to a small distance from *Jerusalem*—**2 Chron. xxvi. 23.** It was, doubtless, with a design to make a suitable impression on the minds of their Kings while living, that such distinctions were made

after their decease. They might thus restrain them from evil, or excite them to good, according as they were fearful of being execrated, or desirous of being honored when they were dead.

Franklin informs us, that among the Egyptians, as soon as a man was dead he was brought to his trial: if it were proved that the deceased had led a bad life, his memory was condemned, and his body denied the honors of sepulture. The Sovereign himself was not exempted from this inquest upon his death, but suffered an impartial scrutiny, by a public trial, as well as the most common subject. Some of them were not ranked among the *honored* dead, and, consequently, were deprived of public burial. Thus the Israelites would not suffer the bodies of some of their flagitious Princes to be carried into the sepulchres appropriated to their virtuous Sovereigns.—*Burder.*

Reduc'd to his own stature, low or high,
As vice, or virtue, sinks him, or sublimes.

YOUNG.

NO. 184.—ANNIVERSARY MOURNING FOR THE DEAD.

xxv. 25. *And all the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah, in their lamentations, to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel.*

The Orientals not only repair the graves of their dead, cover their tombs with ever-green, and plant flowers in their burial places, but they lament the death of the virtuous public character in anniversary solemnities. Their lamentations are attended with mournful music, and oftentimes performed in such a manner as may best represent the circumstances of the affliction or death of their late friends. The Persians annually mourn for Houssain, second son of

Ali, and grandson to Mahommed, whom they believe to be the rightful Khalif; but who was killed by the troops of his rival. They annually visit his sepulchre at Kerbela, near the ancient Babylon, with great devotion. Their mourning for him continues ten days, during which time all pleasures are suspended: they dress as mourners, and deliver discourses concerning his death to numerous assemblies; to which are added mournful cries and melancholy music.

The mourning for the death of *Josiah*, and that for *the daughter of Jephtha*, were probably of this kind. The latter was, without controversy, an annual solemnity.—*Judges*, xi. 39. 40; and the sacred writer seems to mean, that the anniversary mourning for Josiah continued to the time of his writing this history.—*Harmer*.

Heav'n gives us friends, to bless the present scene;
Resumes them, to prepare us for the next.

YOUNG.

EZRA.

NO. 185.—FACTITIOUS METALS OF GREAT VALUE.

viii. 27. *Vessels of fine copper, precious as gold.*

THE Corinthian brass is said to have been more esteemed than silver, among the Romans. This was a composition formed accidentally by the burning of Corinth, and supposed to consist of a mixture of gold, silver, and brass.

Sir J. Chardin (M. S. note) has mentioned a mixed metal used in the East, and highly esteemed there, which might probably be as ancient as the time of Ezra. He says, “I have heard some Dutch gentle-

men speak of a metal in the island of Sumatra, and among the Macassars, much more esteemed than gold; which royal personages alone might wear. It is a mixture, if I remember right, of gold and steel, or of copper and steel." He afterwards added to this note, "Calmbac is this metal; composed of gold and copper. In color it nearly resembles the pale carnation-rose; has a very fine grain; and the polish extremely lively. Gold is not of so lively and brilliant a color. I believe there is steel mixed with the gold and the copper."—*Harmer.*

NO. 186.—EXTERNAL MARKS OF LAMENTATION.

ix. 3. *And plucked off the hair of my head, and of my beard.*

In ordinary sorrows they only neglected their *hair*, and let it hang down scattered in a careless manner: but the practice mentioned by Ezra was used in bitter lamentations; and that also among the Heathen. Thus Homer, speaking of Ulysses and his companions bewailing the death of Elpenor, says, "they sitting down there, howled, and plucked off their hairs."—

Burder.

Job, in his distress, rent his mantle, and shaved his head.—Job, i. 20.: and in Jer. xli. 5. we read of fourscore men, who were going to lament the desolations of Jerusalem, having their *beards* shaven, and their clothes rent. The Persians cut off their hair at the death of Alexander the Great: and the Egyptians lamented the funeral of their *Apis* after a similar manner.

NO. 187.—LUXURY OF EASTERN TABLES.

v. 18. *Now that which was prepared for me daily, was an ox, and six choice sheep; also fowls were prepared for me.*

DR. POCOCKE, speaking of the Bey of Tunis says, that his provisions were *twelve sheep* every day, in addition to fish and fowl. He used to dine at eleven o'clock; and the grandees sat near him. When they had eaten, others sat down; and, finally, the poor took away all that was left. Beef is not now much relished by the Easterns; they think it a coarse food. Mutton is their favorite meat.

MAILLET says, that a *sheep*, with a proper proportion of rice, will suffice threescore people; and of course *twelve sheep* will serve seven hundred and twenty. It appears that the splendor of Nehemiah was equal to the Bey of Tunis; hence we find that he entertained at his table *an hundred and fifty of the Jews and Rulers, besides those that came unto him from among the Heathen.* Some of these great men, doubtless, had their attendants; and, in addition to these, his own servants must have been numerous. Maillet says, that the great Lords of Egypt, who are only private persons, generally keep in attendance a thousand or twelve hundred persons. The retinue of Solomon greatly exceeded that of the Egyptian nobles.—1 Kings, xi. 3.; and his daily provision was much more abundant.—1 Kings, iv. 22, 23.—HARMER.

NO. 188.—STYLE OF LETTERS SENT TO SUPERIORS.

vi. 5. *Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me, in like manner, the fifth time, with an open letter in his hand.* Norden says, that when he was at Esswaen, an

express arrived there, dispatched by an Arab Prince, who brought a *letter* directed to the *Keys*, or Master of the barque, which, according to the usage of the Turks, was *open*; and the Keys not being on board, the Pilot carried it to one of the fathers to read.

Dr. Pococke informs us, that however, customary it was to send *open* letters to common people, it was not so in respect to people of distinction. He has given us a figure of a Turkish letter, put into a satin bag, with a paper tied to it, directed and sealed, and an ivory button tied on the wax. Lady Montague says, that the answer of the Basha of Belgrade to the English Ambassador, going to Constantinople, was brought to him in a purse of scarlet satin.

Niebuhr tells us, that the modern Arabs roll up their letters, and then flatten them to the breadth of an inch, and paste up the end of them instead of sealing them. Hanway says, that the Persians make up their letters in a roll, about six inches long, round which a bit of paper is fastened with gum, and sealed with an impression of ink. From these things it appears, that *Sanballat* meant to *insult* Nehemiah, and to say, that notwithstanding he was preparing to assume the royal dignity, he should be so far from acknowledging him in that character, that he would not even pay him the compliment due to every person of distinction.—

Harmer.

NO. 189.—DESCRIPTION OF THE WOOD-OFFERING.

x. 34. *And we cast the lots among the Priests, the Levites, and the people, for the wood-offering, to bring it into the house of our God.*

Maimonides says, that there was a time fixed for families to go out into the forests and bring in wood,

to be laid in order upon the altar. The day when it came to the turn of a family to bring wood, they offered up a freewill offering; which they called a *wood-offering*; and it was to them a good day, or festival. They were forbidden to mourn, fast, or do any work on that day. Josephus speaks of a feast when it was customary for all to bring wood to the altar, that the sacred fire might not go out.—*Burder.*

NO. 190.—WINE-PRESSES IN TOWNS.

xiii. 15 *In those days, saw I in Judah some treading wine-presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses.*

Though in vine countries they have conveniences for pressing grapes in their vineyards, yet in times of danger they often press them in their towns or cities. Greece is frequently alarmed from its enemies; in consequence of which, though the plantations of olive-trees belonging to Athens are three miles from the city, and six miles in length, yet the mills for grinding and pressing the olives are in the town. The Jews also, it appears, had *wine-presses* within the walls of Jerusalem.

Our translators seem to have been guilty of an oversight in supposing that *sheaves* of corn were brought into Jerusalem at the very time that men were *treading the wine-presses*. The corn was fit to present to the Lord about the end of May or the beginning of June; but the wine and oil, or raisins and ripe olives, not 'till the end of September. The Easterns tread out their corn immediately on its being cut or plucked up, and put in proper repositories, so that there is no such thing to be seen as *sheaves* of corn several

months after harvest. The word translated *sheaves* is the very word that is translated *abundance* in 2 Chron. xxxi. 5. and may signify heaps of raisins, figs, or pomegranates.

The squeezing the grapes for wine, and drying them for raisins, were frequently attended to at the same time. Dr. Chandler informs us, that he set out from Smyrna, to visit Greece, in the end of August; that the vintage was just then begun; the black grapes were spread on the ground in beds, exposed to the sun to dry, for raisins; while in another part the juice was expressed for wine; a man, with feet and legs bare, was treading the fruit in a kind of cistern, with a hole or vent near the bottom, and a vessel beneath it to receive the liquor. Chardin says, that in Persia the presses are formed by making hollow places in the ground, and lining them with mason's work. This corresponds with the parable of our Lord—Matt. xxi. 33.—*Harmer.*

NO. 191.—PLUCKING OFF THE HAIR, A CIVIL PUNISHMENT.

xiii. 25. *And plucked off their hair.*

To cut off the hair of guilty persons seems to be a punishment rather shameful than painful; yet it is thought that pain was added to disgrace, and that they *tore* off the hair with violence, as if they were plucking a bird alive. Sometimes, after they had torn off the hair, they put hot ashes upon the skin, to make the pain more exquisite. After this manner they served adulterers at Athens. This kind of punishment was common in Persia. Plutarch says, that King Artaxerxes, instead of *plucking off the*

hair of such of his Generals as had been guilty of a fault, he obliged them to lay aside the tiara. The Emperor Domitian caused the hair and beard of the philosopher Apollonius to be shaved.—*Burder.*

ESTHER.

NO. 192.—MEN AND WOMEN DO NOT EAT TOGETHER IN THE EAST.

i. 9. *Also Vashti the Queen made a feast for the women in the royal house which belonged to King Ahasuerus.*

ALTHOUGH the women do not eat with the men in Eastern feasts, yet it is usual for them to *feast by themselves* at the same time. Thus, while Ahasuerus feasted the men, Vashti the Queen feasted the women. Chardin says, that this is the custom of Persia and of all the East, and at those times they have always music and dancing.

Maillet, after having given a pompous account of the extraordinary feasting at the castle of Grand Cairo, upon the circumcision of the sons of the Bashaw of Egypt, tells us, that the expence incurred, at the same time, in the apartments of the women of the Bashaw was nearly equal to that of the public feasts of the men.

It is, doubtless, for the same reason that *the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride* are distinctly mentioned—Jer. xxv. 10. and in other places: that is, the noise of mirth was heard *in different apartments*; and not the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, personally considered.

Chardin says, it is common in the East for godfathers, at a marriage festival, to hold two large wax tapers, as high as a man, in the chamber of the bridegroom, where the feast is kept; and adds, “there is another of the like kind in the bride’s apartment.”—

Harmer.

NO. 193.—MANNER OF CASTING LOTS IN THE EAST.

iii. 7. *In the first month (that is the month Nisan) in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast pur, that is, the lot, before Haman, from day to day, and from month to month, to the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar.*

It was customary in the East, by *casting lots* into an urn, to enquire what days would be fortunate, and what not, to undertake business. According to this superstitious practice, Haman endeavoured to find what time in the year was most favorable to the Jews, and what the most unlucky. First he enquired what month was most unfortunate, and found the month Adar; which was the last month in the year, and answerable to our February. There was no festival during this month, nor was it sanctified by any peculiar rites. Then he enquired the day, and found that the thirteenth day was not auspicious to them.—

Ver. 13. Some think there were as many lots as there are days in the year, and for every day he drew a lot, but found none to his mind ’till he came to the last month of all, and to the middle of it. Now this whole business was governed by Providence, by which these lots were directed, and not by the Persian gods, to fall in the last month of the year; whereby almost a whole year intervened between

the design and execution, and gave time for Mordecai to acquaint Esther with it, and for her to intercede with the King for the revoking or suspending his decree, and disappointing the conspiracy.—*Patrick.*

NO. 194.—EASTERN RECORDS.

vi. 1. *On that night could not the King sleep, and he commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles; and they were read before the King.*

In these diaries, wherein was set down what passed every day, the manner of the Persians was to record the names of those who had done the King any signal service. Accordingly Josephus informs us, “that upon the Secretary’s reading of these journals, he took notice of such a person, who had great honors and possessions given him, as a reward for a glorious and remarkable action; and of such another, who made his fortune by the bounties of his Prince, for his fidelity: but that when he came to the particular story of the conspiracy of the two eunuchs against the person of the King, and of the discovery of this treason by Mordecai, the Secretary read it over, and was passing forward to the next, when the King stopped him, and asked, “if that person had any reward given him for his service?” This shews a singular providence of God, that the Secretary should read in that very part of the book, wherein the service of Mordecai was recorded.—*Burder.*

NO. 195.—MANNER OF CONFERRING HONOR.

ix. 9. *Thus shall it be done to the man whom the King delighteth to honor.*

Pitts gives an account of a cavalcade at Algiers,

upon a person's turning Mahomedan; which is designed to do *honor* to the convert, as well as to their law. The apostate being richly habited, and having a turban on his head, mounts a stately horse, with a rich saddle and fine trappings, and is led all round the city *on horseback*; which takes several hours in doing. The apostate is attended with drums, and other music; twenty or thirty serjeants march in order on each side of the horse, with naked swords in their hands; and the crier goes before, giving thanks to God, with a loud voice, for the gift of the new proselyte.

The riding on horseback was an honorable thing in the East. Maillet informs us, that the Consuls of France are the only Frenchmen in Egypt who are permitted to do so; the rest being obliged to ride on asses or on mules. Dr. Pococke describes the English Consul as making his entry into Cairo on horseback, whilst his friends and attendants were on asses; no Christian, but Consuls, being permitted to ride on horseback in the city. Maundrell complains of his being obliged to submit to this affront at Damascus.

Aben-Ezra and others give us to understand, that the crown royal was not to be set on the head of the man, but on the head of the horse. It was usual for the Persians thus to adorn the horse that was led in state; and it appears that the Ethiopians and the Romans do so still.—*Harmer.*

NO. 196.—CRIMINALS NOT SUFFERED TO LOOK UPON
THE KING.

vii. 8. *Haman was fallen upon the bed whereon Es/her.*

was. As the word went out of the King's mouth, they covered Haman's face.

They sat, or rather lay, upon beds, as they ate and drank; and Haman fell down as a suppliant at the feet of Esther, laying his hand upon her knees, and beseeching her to take pity upon him. It was the custom, among the Greeks and Romans, to embrace the knees of those whom they petitioned to be favorable to them. It was, indeed, usual, in their religious assemblies, to touch the knees of their gods. Sulpitius Severus apprehends this to have been done by Haman in the present instance.—*Patrick.*

As the dignity of a Prince made the being arrayed in his clothes a mighty honor, so it did not allow of a malefactor's setting his eyes upon him.

Dr. Pococke speaks of an artifice by which an Egyptian Bey was murdered. A man was brought before him, as a malefactor just taken, with his hands behind him, as if tied, and a napkin over his head, as malefactors commonly have; but when placed before the Bey, he suddenly shot him dead.

Harbonah, in covering *Haman's face*, placed him before the King as a malefactor, to hear his doom.—

Harmer.

How mean that snuff of glory fortune lights,
And death puts out!

Young.

NO. 197.—THE FEAST OF PURIM.

ix. 26. *Wherefore they called these days Purim.*

This feast was to be kept two days, successively; the fourteenth and fifteenth of the month Adar.—Ver. 21. On both days of the feast the modern Jews

read over the Megillah, or book of Esther, in their synagogues. The copy there read must not be printed, but written on vellum, in the form of a roll; and the names of the ten sons of Haman are written on it in a peculiar manner; being ranged, they say, like so many bodies hanged on a gibbet. The reader must pronounce all these names in one breath. Whenever Haman's name is pronounced, they make a terrible noise in the synagogue: some drum with their feet on the floor; and the boys have mallets, with which to knock and make a noise. They prepare themselves for their carnival, by a previous fast, which should continue three days, in imitation of Esther's.—Est. iv. 16.; but they have mostly reduced it to one day.—*Jennings.*

JOB.

NO. 198.—SHE-ASSES COMMON AMONG THE EASTERNs.

i. 3. *His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she-asses.*

Job might well be termed *the greatest man in the land of Uz*, when he was possessed of half as many camels as a modern King of Persia. Chardin says, that the Tartars, in 1676, invaded the *camels* of the King of Persia, and took three thousand of them; which was a great loss to him, because he has no more than seven thousand in all, when their number is complete. These beasts carry all the baggage; for which reason they are called the ships of Persia.

Harmer.

Bryant says, it is remarkable that in this passage female asses only are enumerated: the reason is, because the males are few, and not held in equal estimation. *She-asses* were chosen for riding by the natives of those parts; and Balaam's ass is distinguished as a female. They were, probably, led to this choice from convenience; for where the country was so barren, no other animal could subsist so easily as this: and another advantage in the female was, that whoever traversed these wilds upon her, if he could but find sufficient browse and water, was sure to be rewarded with a nutritious beverage.—*Burder*.

NO. 199.—CUSTOM OF EXCHANGING SKINS.

ii. 4. *Skin for skin: yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.*

? Before the invention of money, trade used to be carried on by barter; that is, by exchanging one commodity for another. The men who had been hunting in the woods for wild-beasts would carry their *skins* to market, and exchange them with the armourer for so many bows and arrows. As these traffickers were liable to be robbed, they sometimes agreed to give a party of men a share for defending them, and *skins* were a very ancient tribute: with them they redeemed their own shares of property, and their lives. It is to one or both of these customs that these words allude as a proverb.—*Burder*.

This proverb might be taken from sacrifices, in which there was *skin for skin*; the skin of a beast, for, or instead of, the skin or body of the man, which deserved to be used as the beast was, but was saved or preserved by the sacrifice which was accepted by

God instead of the man. Or it might have been in allusion to hostages, wherein one man is given for, or instead of, another. The sense of the passage may be this: any man will give skin for skin ; the skin, or body, or life of another, whether man or beast, to save his own. Job is not much hurt nor concerned, so long as his own skin is whole and safe.—*Poole.*

NO. 200.—CONDUCT OF THE HEATHEN TOWARDS THEIR GODS.

ii. 10. *Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh.*

Sanctius thinks, that Job refers to the Idumean women ; who, like other Heathens, when their gods did not please them, or they could not obtain of them what they desired, would reproach and cast them away, and throw them into the fire or the water, as the Persians are said to do.—*Burder.*

NO. 201.—POISONED ARROWS USED BY THE ANCIENTS.

vi. 4. *The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit.*

It appears, that the art of *poisoning arrows* was very ancient in Arabia. Horace speaks of the poisoned arrows of the ancient Mauri, or Moors, in Africa. We are informed, that the Africans were obliged to poison their arrows, in order to defend themselves from the wild beasts with which their country was infested. Pliny says, that this poison was incurable. Perhaps no passage, in any heathen author, so clearly shews the antiquity and make of poisoned arrows, as what we read in Homer concerning Ulysses,—that he went to Ephyra, a city of

Thessaly, in order to procure from Ilus, the son of Mermerus, some deadly poison for smearing his brazen-pointed *arrows*.—*Burder*.

NO. 202.—METHOD OF CATCHING THE CROCODILE IN EGYPT.

vii. 12. *Am I a sea, or a whale, that thou settest a watch over me?*

By the term *whale* we are, probably, to understand the crocodile. This amphibious creature is very common in Egypt, and very terrible to its inhabitants, because they sometimes carry off men and other animals. When they appear, they *watch* them with great attention; and take all proper precautions to secure them.

Maillet says, they have different methods of catching the crocodile. The most common is to dig deep ditches along the Nile, which they cover with straw, in order that the crocodile may tumble into them. Sometimes they take them with hooks, which are baited with a quarter of a pig, or with bacon, of which they are very fond. As soon as he is taken, the hunter runs, with loud cries, and pierces him in the hollow part under the shoulder with a bearded dart, and kills him. Some, indeed, are so bold as to attack the crocodile when it is asleep, without any assistance from the ordinary toils.

Brooks says, “the manner of taking the crocodile in Siam, is by throwing three or four nets across a river, at proper distances from each other; that so if he break through the first, he may be caught by one of the others.”

Am I a sea appears difficult to illustrate. Yet

there were cases in which the overflowing of the Nile was *watched* with dread. Herodotus, speaking of Memphis, that celebrated Egyptian city, says, that there was a mound, which was thrown up one hundred stadia above Memphis, and repaired every year; for if the river should break down that mound, there would be a danger of its drowning all Memphis. If so important a city was in continual danger, and its defending mound watched with so much anxiety, something of a similar nature might have existed in earlier times; in consequence of which, the crocodile and its parent stream are mentioned together.—*Am I a sea, or a whale, that thou seltest a watch over me?*

Harmer.

NO. 203.—TO SWALLOW SPITTLE, A PROVERB.

vii. 19. *Let me alone 'till I swallow down my spittle.*

This is a proverb among the Arabians to the present day; by which they understand, give me leave to rest after my fatigue. This is the favor which Job complains is not granted him. There are two instances, quoted by Schultens, which illustrate the passage. One is of a person, who, when eagerly pressed to give an account of his travels, answered with impatience, “Let me swallow down my spittle; for my journey hath fatigued me.” The other instance is of a quick return made to one who used that proverb: “Suffer me,” said the person importuned, “to swallow down my spittle;” to which his friend replied “ You may, if you please, swallow down even Tigris and Euphrates;” that is, take what time you please.—*Biblical Researches.*

NO. 204.—THE SWIFTNESS OF EASTERN POSTS.

ix. 25. *My days are swifter than a post.*

The common pace of travelling in the East is very slow. Camels go little more than two miles an hour. Those who carry messages in haste move very differently. Dromedaries, a sort of camel which is exceedingly swift, are used for this purpose; and Lady Montague asserts, that they far out-run the swiftest horses. There are also messengers who run on foot; and who sometimes go an hundred and fifty miles in less than twenty-four hours. With what energy then might Job say, *my days are swifter than a post.* Instead of passing away with a slowness of motion like that of a caravan, my days of prosperity have disappeared with a swiftness exceeding that of a messenger carrying dispatches upon a swift dromedary.—*Harmer.*

Sandys says, that a thousand Arabs and Moors have informed him, that the dromedary will hold on a violent hard trot for four and twenty hours upon a stretch, without shewing the least sign of weariness, or inclination to bait; and that having swallowed a ball or two of barley-meal, with a bowl of water or camel's milk, the animal seems as fresh as at first setting out, and ready to continue running at the same rate for as many hours longer. They pass a thong through the gristle of the creature's nose, which serves for a bridle.—*Calmet.*

But grant man happy; grant him happy long;
Add to life's highest prize her latest hour;
That hour, so late, is nimble in approach,
That, like a post, coines on in full career.

Young.

NO. 205.—MANNER OF MAKING CHEESE IN THE EAST.

x. 10. *Hast thou not poured me out as milk, and curdled me like cheese.*

Dr. Shaw says, that the sheep and the goats contribute to the Eastern dairies, particularly in the making of *cheese*. Instead of rennet, especially in the summer season, they turn the *milk* with the flowers of the great-headed thistle, or wild artichoke; and putting the *curds* afterwards into small baskets, made with rushes, or with the dwarf palm, they bind them up close and press them. The Barbary *cheeses* are small, rarely weighing above two or three pounds, and in the shape of our penny loaves. The Eastern cheeses are so very soft, that Sandys imagined they were not pressed at all. “A beastly kind of unpressed *cheese*, that lies in a lump,” is his description of this part of the Eastern diet.—*Harmer.*

NO. 206.—SIGNS OF INDIGNATION.

xvi. 9. *He gnasheth upon me with his teeth.*

Homer, describing Achilles arming to revenge the death of Patroclus, among other signs of indignation, mentions the grinding of his teeth:—

Grief and revenge his furious heart inspire,
His glowing eye-balls roll with living fire :
He grinds his teeth, and, furions with delay,
O'erlooks th' embattled host, and hopes the bloody day.

POPE.

Herculus also, in *Virgil*, is described as raging in mind and *gnashing* his teeth.—*Burder.*

NO. 207.—SEPULCHRAL MEMORIALS USED IN THE EAST.

xix. 23, 24. *Oh that my words were now written ! oh*

that they were printed in a book! that they were graven with an iron pen and lead, in the rock for ever!

There is a method of writing, in the East, intended to fix words on the memory ; but the writing is not designed to continue. Dr. Shaw says, that in Barbary the Moorish and Turkish boys are taught to write upon a smooth thin board, slightly daubed over with whiting, which may be wiped off and renewed at pleasure. No doubt things were often wiped out of the memory of the Arabs in the days of Job, as well as out of their writing-tables. Job therefore says, *Oh that they were printed in a book, from whence they should not be blotted out!* But books were liable to injuries : hence he wishes that his words might be *graven in a rock*, the most lasting way of all.

The Prefetto of Egypt, speaking of Arabia, where it is supposed Job lived, says, that they came to a large plain, surrounded with high hills, which were called *Gebel el Mokatab*, that is, *the written mountains*. He says, that they passed by several others, for an hour together, engraved with ancient unknown characters, which were cut in the hard marble rock, twelve or fourteen feet above the surface of the ground ; and though they had in their company persons who were acquainted with the Arabic, Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, Coptic, Latin, Armenian, and Turkish languages, yet none of them had any knowledge of those characters. He conceived that they were probably engraved by the Chaldeans ; but the Bishop of Clogher thought that they were ancient Hebrew characters, engraven by the Israelites, during their abode in the wilderness. Public records were anciently

written on rolls of *lead*; and the Septuagint seem to suppose, that Job meant the recording things after a similar way. “Who will cause my words to be written, to be put in a book, that shall last for ever; with an iron pen and lead,” (i. e. upon lead) “or to be engraven on the rocks?” Grey supposes, that the letters were hollowed in the rock with the iron pen or chissel, and then filled up with melted lead, in order to be more legible; but it doth not appear that any of these inscriptions were so filled up.—*Harmer.*

NO. 208.—LIGHTS USED IN THE EAST.

xxi. 17. *How oft is the candle of the wicked put out! and how oft cometh their destruction upon them!*

Maillet informs us, that the houses of Egypt are never without lights; that they not only burn lamps all the night long, but in all the inhabited apartments of the house; and that the poorest people would rather retrench part of their food, than have their lights extinguished. If such were the ancient custom, not only of Egypt, but of the neighbouring countries of Judea and Arabia, it will serve strongly to illustrate several passages of scripture.

Jeremiah makes the taking away of the *light of the candle*, and a total desolation, the same thing.—Jer. xxv. 10. 11. Job describes the destruction of a family amongst the Arabs after the same manner: and Bildad, using the same thought, says, *the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine*.—Chap. xviii. 5. On the other hand, when God would bless the house of David, he promises to give him a *light always in Jerusalem*.—1 Kings, 11. 36.

The tents of Princes used to be frequently illuminated, as a mark of honor and dignity. Norden says, that the tent of the Bey of Girge was distinguished from the other tents by forty lanterns, suspended before it in form of chequer work: and possibly something of this sort existed in the days of Job, *when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness.*—Chap. xxix. 3.

Harmer.

It was common also to illuminate houses, on occasions of joy. Mr. Scott seems to think it an allusion to the lamps, which hung from the ceiling, in the banqueting rooms of the wealthy Arabs: not unlike what Virgil mentions in the palace of Dido:—

From gilded roofs depending lamps display
Nocturnal beams, that imitate the day.

DRYDEN.

NO. 209.—ROCKS, PLACES OF ABODE;

xxiv. 8. *They are wet with the showers of the mountains, and embrace the rock for want of a shelter.*

This exactly agrees with what Niebuhr says of the modern wandering Arabs near Mount Sinai:—"those who cannot afford a tent, spread out a cloth upon four or six stakes; and others spread their cloth near a tree, or endeavour to shelter themselves from the heat and the rain in the cavities of the rocks."—

Burder.

They are glad when they can find a cavern or cleft of a rock in which they may have some protection against the injuries of the weather, and an hiding place from the fury of their oppressors.—*Poole.*

NO. 210.—MATERIALS USED FOR BUILDING IN THE EAST.

xxiv. 16. *In the dark they dig through houses, which they had marked for themselves in the day-time.*

Egmont and Hayman inform us, that the walls of the Eastern houses are very thick, in order to shelter the inhabitants from the heat. They are sometimes built of mud, sometimes of bricks formed of mud, and sometimes they are built of stone.—Rev. xiv. 40. Mud houses make the streets dusty when there is wind, and dirty when there is rain. Maundrell says, that at Damascus, upon a violent rain, the whole city becomes a quagmire, by the washing of the houses. Thus the Prophet supposes the quantity of dust and mire of the streets of Eastern cities to be very great. *Tyrus heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets.*—Zech. ix. 3.

Chardin says, that the Eastern bricks are in shape like those of Europe, and commonly dried in the sun; that they are made of clay moistened with water, and mixed with straw.

Houses built of such frail materials rendered them liable to the assault spoken of by Job; whilst the thickness of the walls makes the term *digging* peculiarly expressive.

If the Eastern bricks are not very durable, yet their mortar, especially one sort of it, is extremely so. Dr. Shaw says, it is composed of one part of sand, two of wood ashes, and three of lime, well mixed together, and beaten for three days and nights incessantly, with wooden mallets. With this mortar they used, in general, to plaster their houses. Sir J. Chardin supposes, that the Prophet alludes to this custom of making mortar, when he says, *ye shall tread down the*

wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet.—Mal. iv. 3—Harmer.

NO. 211.—SITTING ON A CUSHION, A TOKEN OF RESPECT.

xxix. 7. *When I prepared my seat in the street.*

Sitting upon a cushion is an expression of honor; and preparing a seat for a person of distinction, seems to mean laying things of this kind on a place where such an one is to sit. Chardin says, that in Asia, it is not common for the people to go into the shops, which are mostly small, but they are accommodated with wooden seats on the outside; and the people of quality cause carpets and cushions to be carried before them, in order that they may repose themselves more agreeably.

It is natural to suppose that Job sent his servants to furnish one of the public seats for their master. Thus Eli's *seat by the way-side*, 1 Sam. iv. 13. was probably adorned after a similar manner, and in a way becoming so dignified a personage: Perhaps Job speaks of himself as a civil Magistrate, as a Judge upon the bench, who had a seat erected for him to sit upon, to hear and to try causes. This seat was set up in the street, in the open air, before the gate of the city, where great numbers might be convened to hear and see justice done. Norden informs us, that the Arabs, to this day, hold their courts of justice in an open place under the Heavens, as in a field or a market-place.

Harmer.

NO. 212.—PILLARS OF SAND CARRIED ABOUT BY THE WIND.

xxx. 22. *Thou liftest me up to the wind: thou causest me to ride upon it, and dissolvest my substance.*

Mr. Bruce says, "on the 14th, at seven in the morning, we left Assa Hagga, our course being due north. At one o'clock, we alighted among some accacia trees, at Waadi el Halboub, having gone twenty-one miles. We were here at once surprized and terrified by a sight, surely one of the most magnificent in the world. In that vast expanse of desart, from W. and to N. W. of us, we saw a number of prodigious pillars of sand at different distances, at times moving with great celerity, at others stalking on with a majestic slowness: at intervals we thought they were coming in a very few minutes to overwhelm us; and small quantities of sand did actually, more than once, reach us. Again they would retreat, so as to be almost out of sight, their tops reaching to the very clouds. The tops were often separated from the bodies; and these, once disjoined, dispersed in the air, and did not appear any more. Sometimes they were broken near the middle, as if struck with a large cannon shot. About noon they began to advance with considerable swiftness upon us, the wind being very strong at North. Eleven of them ranged alongside of us, about the distance of three miles. The greatest diameter of the largest, appeared as if it would measure ten feet. They retired from us with a wind at S. E. leaving an impression upon my mind to which I can give no name, though surely one ingredient in it was fear, with a considerable share of wonder and astonishment."

If this quotation be allowed to explain the imagery of Job, we see how his dignity might be exalted to grandeur, and even to terror, in the sight of beholders, and again be dispersed, and sink into the undistin-

guished level of a desert. This comparison seems to be adapted to the mind of an Arab, who must have seen, or have been informed of, similar phenomena in the countries around him.—*Calmet.*

Rous'd by Almighty force, a furious storm
Upcaught me, whirl'd me on its eddying gust,
Then dash'd me down, and shatter'd me to dust.

NO. 213.—RESPECT DUE TO SUPERIORS.

xxxi. 35, 36. *That mine adversary had written a book. Surely I would take it upon my shoulder; and bind it as a crown to me.*

Chardin, speaking of the manner in which a letter was delivered to a new Monarch, says, that it was put in a purse of gold cloth, drawn together with strings of twisted gold and silk, with tassels of the same ; and the chief Minister put his own seal upon it. The General who delivered it threw himself at his Majesty's feet, bowing to the very ground ; then, rising upon his knees, he drew out of the bosom of his garment the bag wherein was the letter, which the Assembly had sent to the new Monarch. Presently he opened the bag, took out the letter, kissed it, laid it to his forehead, presented it to his Majesty, and then rose up. The Editor of “The Ruins of Balbac” observed, that the Arab Governor of that city respectfully applied the firman of the Grand Seignior to his forehead, when he and his fellow-travellers first waited on him, and then kissed it, declaring himself the Sultan’s slave’s slave.

Sir T. Roe informs us, that when the Mogul sends his commands, by letters, to any of his Governors, those papers are entertained with as much respect

as if himself were present. The Governor having intelligence that such letters are coming near him, himself, with other inferior officers, rides forth to meet the patamar, or messenger that brings them ; and as soon as he sees those letters he alights from his horse, falls down on the earth, takes them from the messenger, and lays them on his head, whereon he binds them fast: then retiring to his place of public meeting, he reads and answers them. To such a custom as is here described Job seems to allude in this passage.

Burder, &c.

PSALMS.

NO. 214.—SWIFTNESS ESTEEMED IN WARRIORS.

xviii. 33. *He maketh my feet like hinds' feet.*

THIS was reckoned a very honorable qualification amongst the ancient warriors; who, as they generally fought on foot, were enabled, by their agility and swiftness, speedily to run from place to place, to give orders, attack their enemies, protect their friends, or for any other purposes the service might require of them.—*Burder.*

God, who had given him wisdom to contrive, favours him with speed to execute:

NO. 215.—ANCIENT BOWS.

xviii. 34. *He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.*

This argues great muscular strength. Thus in the story of the bow of Ulysses, which none of the suitors were able to draw, it is said,

So the great master drew the mighty bow,
And drew with ease : one hand aloft display'd
The bending horns, and one the string essay'd.

ODYSS.

When Ulysses had thus bent his bow, and shot
the arrows through the rings, he glories, and says to
his son Telemachus,

Nor have I wrought thee shame ;
Nor err'd this hand unfaithful to its aim ;
Nor prov'd the toil too hard ; nor have I lost
That ancient vigour, once my pride and boast.

POPE.

Herodotus tells us, that when Cambyses sent his spies into the country of Ethiopia, the King of that country, well understanding the intention of their coming, said to them, “ When the Persians can easily draw bows of this largeness, then let them invade the Ethiopians.” He then unstrung the bow, and gave it them to carry to their master.—Burder.

NO. 216.—ANCIENT PRIESTLY CUSTOM.

*xxvi. 6. I will wash my hands in innocency: so will
I compass thine altar, O Lord.*

When the Priests had laid the sacrifice upon the altar, bound it to the horns thereof at the four corners, and poured out the blood, it was customary for them to wash their hands, as preparatory to their walking round the altar. In the worship of the heathen, this ceremony appears to have been performed prior to the offering up of the sacrifice.—

Burder.

But come ye pure, in spotless garbs array'd,
For you the solemn festival is made.
Come follow thrice the victim round the lands,
In running water purify your hands.

GRAINGER.

Eustathius says, that it was the ancient custom, because they thought that none but those who were clean and pure should meddle with sacred things.

NO. 217.—HANDS LIFTED UP IN PRAYER.

xxviii. 2. *Hear the voice of my supplications when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle.*

The lifting up of the *hands* towards an object of devotion, or an holy place, was an ancient homage both among the Jews and the Heathen; which continues to the present time.

Pitts, in his account of the religion and manners of the Mahomedans, speaking of the Algerines throwing wax-candles and pots of oil overboard, as a present to some Marrabbot,* says, “when this is done, they all together hold up their hands, begging the Marrabbot’s blessing, and a prosperous voyage; and if at any time they should happen to be chased, or to be in a storm, they will gather money and do likewise.” The Marrabbits have generally a little neat room built over their graves, resembling, in figure, their mosques or churches; which is very neatly cleaned, and well looked after. The people, in passing those places, will often lift up their hands, and say some short prayer.

In like manner, Pitts tells us, that at quitting the beet, or holy house at Mecca, to which they make devout pilgrimages, “they hold up their hands towards the beet, making earnest petitions, and then keep going backward, ‘till they come to the farewell gate. All the way as they retreat, they continue

* Mahomedan saiat.

petitioning, holding up their hands, with their eyes fixed on the beet, until they are out of sight of it; and so go to their lodgings weeping." *If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god: shall not God search this out?*—Ps. xliv. 20, 21.—*Harmer.*

NO. 218.—DEDICATION OF HOUSES.

xxx. (Title) *A psalm and song, at the dedication of the house of David.*

It was common, when any person had finished a house, and entered into it, to celebrate it with great rejoicing, and to perform some religious ceremonies, to secure the protection of Heaven. Thus when the second temple was finished, the Priests and Levites, and the rest of the captivity, kept the dedication of the house of God with joy, and offered numerous sacrifices.—Ezra vi. 16. We read in the New Testament of the *feast of the dedication*, appointed by Judas Maccabeus, in memory of the purification of the temple of Jerusalém, after it had been defiled, and laid in ruins, by Antiochus Epiphanes. This feast was celebrated, annually, by solemn sacrifices, music, songs, and hymns to the praise of God, for eight days successively, down to the time of its destruction by Titus. This custom was common amongst private persons.—Deut. xx. 5. The Romans also dedicated their temples, their theatres, their statues, and their houses.—*Chandler.*

NO. 219.—DROUGHT OF EASTERN SUMMERS.

xxxii. 4. *My moisture is turned into the drought of summer.*

In England, and the neighbouring countries, it is

common for rain to fall in all months of the year : but it is not so in the Levant. Egypt has scarce any rain at all : and Dr. Shaw affirms, that it is as uncommon in what at Algiers they call the Desart, which is the most southern part of that country. Rain, indiscriminately, in the winter months, and none at all in the *summer*, is what is common in the East. Jacobus de Vitriaco says, that “thunder and lightning, which are so common in western countries in the summer, happen in the Holy Land in winter. In the summer it seldom or never rains there : but in winter, though the returns of rain are not so frequent, yet, after they begin to fall, they pour down for three or four days and nights together, as vehemently as if they would drown the country.” The withered appearance of an Eastern summer, which is very dry, is doubtless what the Psalmist refers to, when he says, *my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.*—Harmer.

NO. 220.—WATER-SPOUTS IN THE EAST.

xlii. 7. *Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy water-spouts ; all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.*

Natural Philosophers often make mention of *water-spouts*, which are most surprising appearances. In our text, the Psalmist seems to be describing those phenomena, and painting a storm at sea.

Dr. Shaw tells us, that water-spouts are more frequent near the Capes of Latikea, Greego, and Carmel, than in any other part of the Mediterranean. These are all places on the coast of Syria ; and the last of them every body knows to be in Judea ; it being a place rendered famous by the prayers of the Prophet Elijah.

The Jews could not be ignorant of what happened frequently on their coasts; and David must have known of those dangers of the sea, if he had not actually seen them, as Dr. Shaw did. Strange as it might appear, some Commentators speak of those water-spouts, as only meaning vehement rains; and think, that David compares his affliction to the pouring of water through the spouts of a house; which can have nothing to do with a storm at sea, which the Jewish poet is evidently describing. The frequency of water-spouts on the Jewish coasts, made it very natural for a Jewish poet to mention them, in the description of a violent and dangerous storm.—

Harmer

The Psalmist, doubtless, alludes to complicated and overwhelming afflictions.—

Huge troubles, with tumultuous noise,
Swell like a sea, and round me spread;
Thy *water spouts* drown all my joys,
And rising waves roll o'er my head.

Watts.

NO. 221.—IVORY PALACES.

xlv. 8. *All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia; out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.*

Sir J. Chardin tells us, that the late King of Persia caused a tent to be made, which cost two millions.* They called it the house of gold, because gold glittered every where about it. This account casts light upon several passages of scripture. Here we see how natural it is for the Easterns to use the words *house* and *tent* as equivalent terms: this tent, it seems, was

* French livres we are to suppose.

called “the house of gold.” Thus the goodly raiment of Esau, which was left in the custody of Rebekah, is said to be *with her in the house*—Gen. xxvii. 15; which it is certain was kept in a tent. On the other hand, when Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite, wanted to cause the people to abandon David, he blew a trumpet, crying, *Every man to his tents, O Israel*—2 Sam. xx. 1.; though Israel did not dwell in moveable habitations at that time, but in cities.

In the next place his tent was called “the house of gold,” not that it was wholly made of gold, but because it was highly ornamented with it. This teaches us what we are to understand by *ivory palaces* and *the golden city*, of which we read in the scriptures. The ivory palaces, appear to mean houses richly adorned with that precious substance: and the golden city—Isa. xiv. 4. means the city remarkable for its being richly gilded in many parts of it.—*Harmer.*

The Lord of all things, in his humble birth,
Makes mean the proud magnificence of earth;
The straw, the manger, and the mould’ring wall,
Eclipse its lustre; and I scorn it all.

GUION.

NO. 222.—TEARS PRESERVED IN URNS.

lvi. 8. *Put thou my tears into thy bottle.*

Doth not this seem to intimate, that the custom of putting tears into urns, so well known amongst the Romans, was more anciently in use amongst the Eastern nations; and particularly amongst the Hebrews? These urns were of different materials; some of glass, and some of earth. It was common, to place the urns upon the sepulchres of the deceased, as a memorial of the distress and affliction of their

surviving relatives and friends. It will be difficult to account for this expression of the Psalmist, but upon this supposition. If this be allowed, the meaning will be, "let my distress, and the tears I shed in consequence of it, be ever before thee, excite thy kind remembrance of me, and plead with thee to grant me the relief I stand in need of."—Chandler.

NO. 223.—CHARMING OF SERPENTS.

Iviii. 4. 5. *They are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; which will not hearken to the voice of the charmers, charming never so wisely.*

Whether any man ever possessed the power to enchant or charm adders and serpents; or whether those who pretended to do so profited only by popular credulity, it is certain, that a favorable opinion of magical power once existed. Numerous testimonies to this purpose may be collected from ancient writers. Modern travellers also afford their evidence. Mr. Browne, in his travels in Africa, says, "the serpent most common at Kahira, is of the viper class; and, undoubtedly, poisonous. If one of them enter a house, the charmer is sent for, who uses a certain form of words. I have seen three serpents enticed out of the cabin of a ship, lying near the shore: the operator handled them; and then put them into a bag. At other times, I have seen the serpents twist round the bodies of these Psylli in all directions, without having had their fangs extracted or broken, and without doing them any injury."

There appears to have been a method of charming serpents by sounds, so as to render them tractable and harmless. The ancients expressly ascribe the incan-

tation of serpents to the human voice. Thus Virgil attributes the like effect on serpents to the song, as well as to the touch of the enchanter.

His wand and holy words the viper's rage,
And venom'd wound of serpents, could assuage.

DRYDEN.

Music has a wonderful influence upon serpents. Adders will swell at the sound of a flute, raising themselves up on the one half of their body, turning themselves about, and beating proper time. Chardin says, that the way made use of to tame serpents is to break their teeth; and to this custom David is supposed to allude when he says, *break their teeth, O God, in their mouth*—ver. 6.—*Burder.*

NO. 224.—A BANNER, A SIGN OF PROTECTION.

lx. 4. *Thou hast given a banner to them that feared thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth.* The satisfaction which Benhadad received about the safety of his life, appears to have been by words: but the modern Eastern people have looked upon the giving them a *banner* as a more sure pledge of protection. Albertus Aquensis tells us, that when Jerusalem was taken, in 1099, about three hundred Saracens got upon the roof of a very lofty building, and earnestly begged for quarter, but could not be induced, by any promises of safety, to come down, until they had received the banner of Tancred* as a pledge of life. The Saracens surrendering themselves upon the delivery of a standard, proves in how strong a light they looked upon their giving them a banner, since

* One of the chiefs of the croisade army.

they could confide in that, when they could not trust in verbal promises.

Perhaps the delivery of a banner was anciently esteemed, in like manner, as an obligation to protect; and that the Psalmist considered it in this light when, upon a victory gained over the Syrians and Edomites, he said, *thou hast given a banner to them that feared thee, that it may be displayed, or lifted up, to inspire with confidence in the protection of God, because of the truth:* thy word of promise, which is an assurance of protection, like the giving me and my people a banner, the surest of all pledges.—*Harmer.*

NO. 225.—MANNER OF SENDING LETTERS BY ARROWS.

lxiv. 3. *And bend their bows to shoot their arrows,
even bitter words.*

This appears to be an allusion to the practise of fixing letters in *arrows*, and *shooting* or directing them where it was desired they should fall and be taken up. Timoxenus and Artabazus sent letters to one another in this way at the siege of Potidea. Thus, the Jews say, Shebna and Joab sent letters to Sennacherib, acquainting him that all Israel were willing to make peace with him; but Hezekiah would not suffer them.

Gill.

Philip, King of Macedon, lost one of his eyes, before the city of Methone, by a very singular accident. Having insultingly refused the services of Aster, a cross-b Bowman, Aster threw himself into the city, and shot an arrow, on which was written “To Philip’s right eye,” and gave him the strongest proof of his being a good marksman; for he hit him in his right eye. Philip sent back the same arrow, with this in-

scription, “ If Philip take the city, he will hang up Aster ;” and accordingly he was as good as his word.

Rollin.

There is a circumstance mentioned by Mr. Mungo Park, which might possibly have had its parallel in the conduct of the ancients ; and if it had, clearly accounts for certain figures referred to in the sacred scriptures. “ Each of the negroes took from his quiver a handful of arrows ; and putting two between his teeth, and one in his bow, waved to us with his hand to keep at a distance.”—*Burder.*

In like manner the Psalmist says, the words of his enemies are *drawn swords*—lv. 21. A passage of Thevenot says, “ the galliot met with a Turkish galliot ; and having laid her athwart hauze, they met with a stout resistance : the Turks who were on board of her having a naked sword between their teeth, and a musket in their hands, beat off their adversaries.”—

Calmet.

The metaphor of the arrow and the sword, applied to powerful speech, is bold, but just. It is said of Pericles, by Aristophanes,—

His pow'rful speech
Pierced the hearer's soul, and left behind,
Deep in his bosom, its keen point infix'd.

NO. 226.—CONSECRATED DOVES AND FISHES.

Ixviii. 13. *Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.*

Dr. Richard Chandler, in his travels in Asia Minor, says, that the shepherds and fishermen make use of rocks and caverns for a retreat; and kindle fires in

them for culinary purposes. *Doves* frequently resorted to those places; which must have very much smutted and dirtied their feathers.

Great indeed had been the afflictions of Israel in the land of Egypt, where they had been obliged to work, without remission, in the brick-kilns: nevertheless, the spirit of prophecy portends the most flattering change of circumstance—*ye shall be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.*

The color of their common pigeons seems to be like that of the pigeons of our country—blue or ash color. Pitts says, that at Mecca, they come in great flocks to the temple, where they are usually fed by the hagges.* The poor people of Mecca also beg the hagges to bestow something on “hammamet metta nabee;” i. e. the pigeons of the prophet. Some of the doves of Palestine were white, and were treated with great respect, like the blue pigeons of Mecca; and considered as devoted to some deity.

The intermingled gold doth not appear to be the description of an animal adorned by the hand of nature, but by that of superstition. The ancient Heathen are known to have ornamented their sacred animals with trinkets of gold; and thus the Syrians, most probably, adorned their doves.

Sir J. Chardin tells us, that at a town called Cor-nicha, he found, in the court-yard of a mosque, two reservoirs, full of fishes; some of which had rings of brass, some of silver, and others of gold, in token of their being consecrated. Dr. R. Chandler gives us a note from Elian, who speaks of tame fishes that wore

*The pilgrims.

golden neck-laces and ear-rings, in a fountain belonging to the temple of the military Jupiter. The sense of our text appears to be, that notwithstanding Israel had been greatly degraded, yet should he be beautiful and glorious as a consecrated dove.—*Harmer.*

Why should I say
How thro' the crowded towns the milk-white dove,
In Syria sacred, may with safety rove.

TIBULLUS.

NO. 227.—SINGING IN SOLEMN PROCESSION.

Ixviii. 25. *The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after: among them were the damsels playing with timbrels.*

This custom prevailed also among the Gentiles in their solemn processions. Both before and after, as well as during the time of their libations and sacrifices, they sang hymns in praise of their respective deities; and when they celebrated the supposed advent of their gods at particular times, it was with the greatest demonstrations of joy, with dancing, music, and songs. On this account they employed persons to compose appropriate hymns; and that the singing of them might be performed with greater harmony and dignity, they chose persons trained up to, and well skilled in vocal music. For this employment they brought up children of both sexes, who marched in procession at their great festivals.—*Chandler.*

NO. 228.—PROSTRATIONS COMMON IN THE EAST.

Ixxii. 8: 9. *He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him, and his enemies shall lick the dust.*

The first King of Persia instituted the ceremony of kissing the feet, as a mark of reverence to be paid by subjects to their Sovereigns; and as the manner of taking the oath of fidelity by vassal or feudatory Princes. This ceremony was afterwards changed into kissing the ground, in the presence of their Princes, or touching it with their foreheads, whilst that of kissing the feet was reserved for strangers, and subjects of the highest quality.

When the Psalmist says, *he shall have dominion from sea to sea*, he marks out extent of empire: when he adds, *they that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him*, it is equivalent to saying, “the wild Arabs, which the greatest conqueror could never tame, shall bow before him or become his vassals;” nay, his *enemies*, and, consequently, these Arabs among the rest, *shall lick the dust*; shall court him with the most abject submissions. This is beautifully emblematic of the triumph of Christ over those nations and individuals, whom it appeared impossible for the gospel to subdue. *The Kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents. the Kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all Kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.*—Harmer.

NO. 229.—THE RAPID GROWTH OF GRASS.

Ixxii. 16. *They of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.*

The rapidity with which grass grows in the East, is the idea referred to in these words. Sir T. Roe says, “when the ground hath been destitute of rain nine months together, and looks like the barren sand

in the deserts of Arabia, where there is not one spire of green grass to be found, within a few days after those fat enriching showers begin to fall, the face of the earth is so revived, that it is presently covered all over with a pure green mantle.”—*Burder.*

NO. 230.—HORNS WORN IN THE EAST.

lxxv. 5. *Lift not up your horn on high: speak not with a stiff neck.*

This passage will receive some illustration from Bruce's remarks, in his travels to discover the source of the Nile, where, speaking of the head-dress of the Governors of the provinces of Abyssinia, he represents it as consisting of a large broad fillet, bound upon their forehead, and tied behind their head. In the middle of this is a *horn*, or a conical piece of silver, gilt, about four inches long, much in the shape of our common candle extinguishers. This is called *kiin*, or *horn*; and is only worn in reviews, parades after victory, or at times of rejoicing, when they are anointed with new, sweet, or fresh oil. The crooked manner in which they hold the neck, when this ornament is on the forehead, for fear it should fall forward, seems to agree with what the Psalmist calls *speaking with a stiff neck*. This situation of the horn is happily alluded to in different parts of the sacred writings.—*My horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn.*—Ps. xcii. 10.—*Burder.*

NO. 231.—DIFFERENT SORTS OF WINES.

lxxv. 8. *In the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red: it is full of mixture, and he poureth*

out of the same; but the dregs thereof all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out and drink them.

The wines that are produced in different places, differ considerably in their qualities. The wine of Lebanon, and that of Helbon, near Damascus, are mentioned with distinction by the Prophets Hosea and Ezekiel: *Red wine*, in particular, is more esteemed in the East than white. Olearius informs us, that in Persia they put Brazil wood or saffron into their wine, to give it a higher color; which coloring is to make it more tempting to the eye: hence the necessary warning, *Look not on the wine when it maketh itself red.*

Theocritus tells us, that at entertainments where they drank healths, it was usual to drain the vessel they drank out of, as far as the sediment.

I'll drink,
Till to the lees the rosy bowl I sink.

FAWKES.

Their wines were sometimes mingled with a variety of ingredients; such as honey, spices, wine inspissated, by boiling it down to two thirds or one half of the quantity, myrrh, opiates, and other strong drugs. Nott tells us, that the Romans lined their vessels with odorous gums, to give the wine a flavor; and it is said that the Poles and Spaniards follow a similar method at present.

The drunkard is described as one that seeketh *mixed wine*—Prov. xxiii. 30. and is mighty to *mingle strong drink*—Isaiah v. 22.; and hence the Psalmist takes the sublime image of the cup of God's wrath, called by Isaiah—li. 17. the *cup of trembling*. *The*

cup of trembling. The dregs thereof, that is, the thickest sediment of the strong ingredients mingled with it, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them.—Harmer.

NO. 232.—THE VINES AND SYCAMORE-TREES OF EGYPT.

lxxviii. 47. *He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore-trees with frost.*

The vineyards of Egypt were in the country of Fioum. Maillet informs us, that notwithstanding Egypt has many *vines*, the wine of Egypt is by no means equal to the wants of the inhabitants: yet it was so delicious that it found its way to Rome, and was well known in that seat of luxury.

Norden says, that the fruit of the Egyptian vine is of an excellent flavor; and it appears, that it forms a considerable part of the entertainment they give their friends. The Egyptian grape was small, compared with the grapes of Palestine. Dandini, though an Italian, was surprised at the extraordinary size of the grapes of Mount Libanus. He says, that he comprehended, at seeing them, why the Hebrews pushed forwards with so much passion the conquest of the Land of Promise, after they had seen the grapes which the spies of Joshua brought back from the neighbouring countries. Doubdan says, he was informed by the monks about Bethlehem, that they have bunches of grapes there weighing ten or twelve pounds a-piece. Maillet says, that the Egyptians use the young and tender leaf of the vine, as well as its fruit: they wrap it up in little parcels, and so season and cook it as to make a most exquisite sort of food.

Their *sycamores* were very important to them; for

they made their coffins, and probably their barques, of sycamore wood; vast numbers of which were used upon the Nile. The sycamore produces a fig, which is in general use in Egypt; and the Egyptians think themselves well regaled when they have a piece of bread, a couple of sycamore figs, and a pitcher of water from the Nile. Hasselquist, the Swedish traveller, was so gratified with this fruit, that he says, he could scarce refrain from eating it. David placed an officer over those trees, in common with the olive trees.—1 Chron. xxvii. 28.—*Harmer.*

NO. 233.—WATCHMEN EMPLOYED IN THE NIGHT.

xc. 4. *A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday, when it is past, and as a watch in the night.*

Sir J. Chardin says, that the people of the East have no clocks; but that the several parts of the day and of the night, which are eight in all, are publicly taken notice of. In the Indies, the parts of the night are made known, in large cities, as well by instruments as by the rounds of the watchmen, who, with cries and small drums, give them notice that a fourth part of the night is passed. Now as these cries awaked those who had slept in that quarter of the night, it appeared to them but as a moment. There are sixty of these people who perform this task by day, and as many by night; that is, fifteen for each division.

It is plain, that the ancient Jews knew how the night passed away, which was probably by some public notice given them; but whether it was by simply publishing, at the close of each *watch*, what watch was then ended; or whether they made use of any instruments of music in this business, is not easily to

be determined ; and still less what measures of time were used by the watchmen: Dr. Russel says, "the watchmen at Aleppo do not call the hour; but the criers from the mosques sing at evening, midnight, and day-break." The watchmen in the camp of the caravans go their rounds crying, one after another, "God is one—he is merciful;" and often add, "take heed to yourselves."—*Harmer.*

A thousand ages in thy sight,
Are like an ev'ning gone;
Short as the watch that ends the night,
Before the rising sun.

WATTS.

NO. 234.—FREQUENT CHANGE OF VESTURE.

cii. 26. *As a vesture shalt thou change them.*

A frequent change of garments is very common in the East, and that both to shew respect and to display magnificence. Thevenot tells us, that when he saw the Grand Seignior go to the new mosque he was clad in a satin dolimar, of a flesh color, and a vest nearly similar; but when he had said his prayers, then he changed his vest, and put on one of a particular kind of green. To this frequent change of vestments amongst the great the Psalmist might allude in those words.—*Harmer.*

NO. 235.—USEFULNESS OF STORKS IN THE HOLY LAND.

civ. 17. *As for the stork, the fir-trees are her house.*

Doubdan informs us, that returning from Cana to Nazareth, on the 8th of May, he saw the fields so filled with flocks of *storks*, that they appeared quite white with them, there being above a thousand in each flock; and when they rose, and hovered in the

air, they seemed like clouds. He says, that they rest on trees in the evening; but doth not tell us whether they build their nests there or not: but if the storks of Palestine roost in trees, there where they rest, when the wanderings of the day are over, may be said to be their *house*.

Chardin, in describing the magnificent pillars that he found at Persepolis, tells us, that the storks make their nests on the top of these columns with great boldness, and are in no danger of being dispossessed. The inhabitants do them no hurt, on account of their devouring serpents, adders, &c. and clearing the country of all kinds of venomous animals.

Baron de Tott says, that the stork is revered by the Orientals, as a species of household god.—*Harmer.*

Who bid the stork, Columbus like, explore
Heav'n's not his own, and worlds unknown before?

POPE.

NO. 236.—WEAKNESS OCCASIONED BY FASTING.

cix. 24. *My knees are weak through fasting; and my flesh faileth of fatness.*

Either with voluntary fasts, to which the frequency and long continuance of his calamities obliged him; or with forced fasts, sometimes through want of necessary provisions, but most commonly from the loathing of meat, which was occasioned by his excessive sorrows and terrors.—*Psalm cvii. 18.—Poole.*

Lest faint and wearied ere the task was done,
Stretched through the length of one revolving sun,
Their knees might fail, by hunger's force subdued,
And sink, unable to support their load.

MERRICK.

NO. 237.—LIBATIONS OF WINE.

cvi. 13. I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.

Chardin says, that it is the custom in Mingrelia and Georgia, and some other Eastern countries, for people, before they begin a feast, to go out abroad, and, with eyes turned to Heaven, to pour out a *cup* of wine upon the ground ; and he imagined that the like custom prevailed in Ethiopia.

This may be considered as a picture of what the idolatrous Israelites did, when they poured out drink-offerings to the *Queen of Heaven*—Jer. xliv. 17.: but it doth not follow that any thing of this sort was done in their common feasts, or that it was ever done by David. It is certain that the modern Jews, when they annually celebrate the deliverance of their fore-fathers in Egypt, *take a cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord*, singing a portion of the book of Psalms; but they drink the wine, and do not pour it upon the ground; nor do they practise this effusion of wine in their more common feasts.—

Harmer.

It has been observed, that the expression—*the cup of salvation*, was, at least, imitated by the Greeks in their phrase—“the bowl of liberty.” This was the bowl in which, after the recovery of their liberty, they made libations to Jupiter.—Burder.

These ills shall cease, whene'er by Jove's decree
We crown the bowl to heav'n and liberty.

Pope.

NO. 238.—SMOKINESS OF ARABIAN TENTS.

cix. 83. I am become like a bottle in the smoke, yet do I not forget thy statutes.

Cups and drinking vessels of gold and silver were, doubtless, used in the courts of Princes, agreeably to what we learn 1 Kings x. 21: but in the Arab tents they used *bottles* made of goat skin. As the Arabs made fire in their tents, the *smoke* of course must greatly incommod them, and blacken all their utensils. Le Bruyn tells us, that in going from Aleppo to Scanderoon, he was obliged to pass a whole night in a hut of reeds, in the middle of which there was a fire, to boil a kettle of meat that hung over it, and to bake some bread upon the ashes. He says, the smoke was intolerable, the door being the only place by which it could get out of the hut. David must have felt acutely when he was driven from vessels of silver and gold, in the palace of Saul, to live like an Arab, and drink out of a smoky leathern bottle. His language is as if he had said, “My present appearance is as different from what it was when I dwelt at court, as the furniture of a palace differs from that of a poor Arab’s tent.”—*Harmer.*

NO. 239.—UMBRELLAS, MARKS OF DISTINCTION.

exxi. 5. *The Lord is thy keeper; the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.*

An umbrella appears to be a very ancient, as well as very honorable defence against the pernicious effects of the scorching beams of the sun; and is supposed to be that kind of shade to which the Psalmist refers in our text.

Niebuhr, who visited the southern part of Arabia, gives us an account of a solemn procession of the Iman that resides at Sana, who is a great Prince in that part of Arabia, and descended from Mahomed their

great Prophet. The Iman visits the mosque, every Friday, with vast pomp. He says he is preceded by hundreds of soldiers. The Iman, and each of the Princes of his numerous family, had a large umbrella carried by his side ; which is a privilege appropriated to Princes of the blood. The Iman had in his train at least six hundred Lords, as well as ecclesiastics, seculars, and military persons, many of them mounted on superb horses, and a great number of people attended him on foot. On each side of the Iman was carried a flag, with a little silver vessel like a censer, which, it was said, held some charms which made the Iman invincible.

Some have thought that this Psalm refers to those umbrellas where the response, made probably by the ministers of the sanctuary to the declaration of the King, in the two first verses, reminded him, that Jehovah would be to him all that Heathen Princes hoped for, as to defence and honor, from their royal umbrellas and sacred charms. *The Lord is thy keeper : the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.*—

Harmen.

No sun shall smite thy head by day,
Nor the pale moon with sickly ray
Shall blast thy couch ! no baleful star
Dart his malignant fire so far.

Watts.

NO. 240.—ORDERS GIVEN BY SIGNS.

exxiii. 2. *As the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters.*

Pococke says, that at a visit in Egypt, every thing is done with the greatest decency, and the most profound silence ; the slaves or servants standing at the

bottom of the room, with their hands joined before them, watching, with the utmost attention, every motion of their master, who commands them by signs. De la Motraye says, that the Eastern ladies are waited on even at the least wink of the eye, or motion of the fingers, and that in a manner not perceptible to strangers. Baron De Tott relates a remarkable instance of the authority attending this mode of commanding, and of the use of significant motions. “The customary ceremonies on these occasions were over, and Racub (the new Vizier) continued to discourse familiarly with the Ambassador, when the Inuzur-agá (or High-Provost) coming into the hall, and approaching the Pacha, whispered something in his ear, and we observed that the answer he received from him was a slight horizontal motion with his hand; after which the Vizier, instantly resuming an agreeable smile, continued the conversation for some time longer. We then left the hall of audience, and came to the foot of the great stair-case, where we remounted our horses: here nine heads, cut off, and placed in a row, on the outside of the first gate, completely explained the sign which the Vizier had made use of in our presence.” Hence we discover the propriety of the actions performed by the Prophets, and perceive that such conduct was perfectly understood, and very significant.—*Burder.*

NO. 241.—GRASS UPON THE HOUSE-TOP.

cxxix. 6. *Let them be as the grass upon the house-tops, which withereth afore it groweth up.*

Shaw says, that the tops of the houses in Judea are flat, and covered with plaster of terrace. The grass

which grows upon them is small and weak; and being exposed to the scorching rays of the sun, it soon *withers*. Menochius says, that he saw roofs in the island of Corsica flat, with earth upon them, on which grass grew; but in summer it soon withered, and was burnt up by the sun.

Olaus Magnus says, that in the Northern Gothic countries they feed their cattle on the tops of houses, especially in a time of siege. Their houses are built of stone, high and large, and covered with rafters of fir and bark of birch, upon which grass-earth is laid, cut out of the fields four-square; so that their roofs look like green meadows. These spots they sow at times with barley or oats, which is diligently watered, that it may not wither before it arrives at a state of maturity.—*Burder*.

NO 242.—DESCRIPTION OF ANCIENT CROWNS.

exxxii. 18. *His enemies will I clothe with shame; but upon himself shall his crown flourish.*

This idea seems to be taken from the nature of the ancient crowns bestowed upon conquerors. From the earliest periods of history, the laurel, olive, and ivy, furnished crowns to adorn the heads of heroes, who had conquered in the field of battle, gained the prize in the race, or performed some important service to the public. These were the dear-bought rewards of the most heroic exploits of antiquity. This sets the propriety of the phrase in full view. The idea of a crown of gold and jewels flourishing is, at least, unnatural: whereas flourishing is natural to the laurel, the olive, and the ivy. Those crowns were put upon the heads of the victors in full verdure.—*Pirie*.

NO. 243.—THE CRUELTY OF SACKING TOWNS.

cxlvii. 9. *Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones,*

This was an instance of cruelty frequently exercised in the sacking of towns. Thus Isaiah foretells to Babylon, that her children shall be dashed in pieces before her eyes by the Medes—chap. xiii. 16.: and Hosea, speaking of Samaria, says, *she hath rebelled against her God : they shall fall by the sword ; their infants shall be dashed in pieces.*—chap. xiii. 16.—

Burder.

My city burnt,
My bleeding infants dash'd against the floor ;
These I have yet to see, perhaps yet more.

POPE.

NO. 244.—BONES SCATTERED UPON THE EARTH.

cxi. 7. *Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth.*

Whether this expression was designed to be understood literally or figuratively, Mr. Bruce relates a circumstance which shews that it might be literally verified. “At five o'clock we left Garigana, our journey being still to the eastward of north, and at a quarter past six in the evening arrived at the village of that name, whose inhabitants had all perished with hunger the year before, their wretched bones being all unburied, and scattered upon the surface of the ground where the village formerly stood. We encamped among the bones of the dead: no space could be found free from them.”

To the Jews a spectacle of this description must have been very dreadful; as the want of burial was

esteemed one of the greatest calamities which could beset them. The Romans were of opinion, that the soul had no rest, unless the body were properly interred.—*Burder.*

The ghosts rejected are th' unhappy crew,
Depriv'd of sepulchres and fun'ral due :
The boatman Charon : those, the buried host,
He ferries over to the farther coast.

DRYDEN.

NO. 245.—FROST AND SNOW IN THE HOLY LAND.

cxlvi. 16. *He giveth snow like wool ; he scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes.*

Jacobus de Vitriaco informs us, that on the 24th of December, being engaged in an expedition against Mount Tabor, the cold was so severe, that many of the poor people, and of the beasts of burden, actually died. Albertus Aquensis says, that the same thing happened to thirty of the people that attended King Baldwin I. in the mountainous districts of Arabia, by the Dead Sea, where they had to conflict with horrible hail, with ice, and unheard-of *snow* and rain. Sir J. Chardin says, that towards the Black Sea, in Iberia and Armenia, the snow falls in flakes as large as walnuts. If the snow in Judea be like unto this, there is a greater energy in the text than is generally discovered. A flake of snow as big as a walnut would, to a British eye, at a distance, appear like a small lock of wool, rather than what it really was.

Egmont and Hayman complain of the severity of the cold on the top of Mount Sinai, in July or the beginning of August, the hottest time of the year. Sandys assures us, that when he was at Sidon, a Moor,

who was returning with an English merchant from Damascus, perished with cold on the top of Antilibanus, while the heat was excessive in the valleys on each side.

Dr. Russell tells us, that the severity of the cold begins at Aleppo about the middle of December; and it seems to do the same in the Holy Land; for Albertus Aquensis says, that Godfrey, of Jerusalem, after having besieged the city of Assur some time, upon the beginning of the severity of the winter, despaired of taking it; and returned to Jerusalem in the middle of December.—*Harnier.*

— gives the winter's snow her airy birth,
And bids the virgin fleeces clothe the earth.

SANDYS.

NO. 246.—COUCHES, WHY CALLED BEDS.

cxl ix. 5. Let them sing aloud upon their beds.

Among some of the most celebrated of the Ancients, war was proclaimed by the ministers of religion; and military expeditions were opened by devout processions and public sacrifices. When David's army was marching out to war against the remnant of the devoted nations, they first went up in solemn procession to the house of God, there to consecrate their arms; at which time they sang the 149th Psalm, which appears to have been composed for such an occasion. The *beds* referred to, on which they were to *sing aloud*, were probably the couches on which they lay at the banquet, attending their sacrifices: which gives a noble sense to a passage on any other interpretation hardly intelligible.—*Doddridge.*

NO. 247.—PROVERBS, A MODE OF INSTRUCTION.

i. 1. *The proverbs of Solomon.*

IN those periods of remote antiquity, which may, with the utmost propriety, be styled, the infancies of societies and nations, the usual, if not the only mode of instruction, was by detached aphorisms, or proverbs. Human wisdom was then, indeed, in a rude and unfinished state: it was not digested, methodized, or reduced to order and connection. Those who, by genius and reflection, exercised in the school of experience, had accumulated a stock of knowledge, were desirous of reducing it into the most compendious form, and comprised in a few maxims those observations which they apprehended most essential to human happiness. This mode of instruction was, in truth, more likely than any other to prove efficacious with men in a rude stage of society; for it professed not to dispute, but to command; not to persuade, but to compel: it conducted them, not by a circuit of argument, but led immediately to the approbation and practice of integrity and virtue. That it might not, however, be altogether destitute of allurement, and lest it should disgust by an appearance of roughness and severity, some degree of ornament became necessary; and the instructors of mankind added to their precepts the graces of harmony, and illuminated them with metaphors, comparisons, allusions, and the other embellishments of style. This manner, which with other nations prevailed only during the first periods of civilization, with the Hebrews continued to be a favorite style to the latest ages of their literature.—*Lowth.*

NO. 248.—MEDICINES USED EXTERNALLY.

iii. 8. *It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.*

Medicines in the East are chiefly applied externally, and in particular to the stomach and belly. Sir J. Chardin applies it to the illustration of the passage before us; and says, it is a comparison drawn from the plaisters, ointments, oils, and frictions, which are made use of in the East upon the belly and stomach in most maladies: they being ignorant, in the villages, of the art of making decoctions and potions, and the proper doses of such things, generally make use of external medicines. It is possible that Solomon might allude to a similar custom in his time, when he says, concerning the fear of the Lord, *it shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.*—Harmer.

NO. 249.—WOMEN INVITE PEOPLE TO BANQUETS.

ix. 3. *She hath sent forth her maidens.*

Hasselquist observed a custom in Egypt, which he imagines to be very ancient. He saw a number of women, who went about inviting people to a banquet. They were about ten or twelve in number, covered with black veils, as is usual in that country. They were preceded by four eunuchs; after them, and on the side, were Moors, with their usual walking-staves. As they were walking, they all joined in making a noise, which he was told signified their joy, but which he thought did not resemble a pleasing song. This passage of Solomon seems to allude to this practice; for *Wisdom is said to have sent forth her maidens, and to cry upon the high places of the city.*—Harmer.

To purest joys she all invites,
Chaste, holy, spiritual delights :
Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
And all her flow'ry paths are peace.

NO. 250.—THORN-HEDGES COMMON IN THE EAST.

xv. 19. *The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns.*

Our living fences of white-thorn have been much admired. Some of those in the Holy Land, in later times, have been equally beautiful; and perfectly answer those passages of the Jewish Prophets which speak of *hedges* made of thorny plants, and of the sharpness of their thorns. Doubdan speaks of a fruitful vineyard, full of olive and fig-trees, as well as vines, about eight miles from Bethlehem, which was inclosed with a hedge strongly formed of thorns and rose-bushes, intermingled with pomegranate-trees, the most pleasant in the world. The wild pomegranate-tree is said to be much more prickly than the other species.

De Tott, speaking of the low lands of Judea, says, that the fig-tree of India supplies it with hedges, and furnishes with impenetrable barriers, which secure the fields of the different proprietors. This plant is, by Dr. Shaw, in his travels, called the prickly pear, upon which, the Doctor tells us, whole families live during the months of August and September.—*Harmer.*

Hasselquist says, that he saw the plantain-tree, the vine, the peach, and the mulberry-tree, all four made use of in Egypt to hedge about a garden: now these are all unarmed plants. This throws an energy into the words of Solomon. *The way of the slothful man is as difficult to him, not only as breaking through a*

hedge, but even through a thorn-fence ; and also into that threatening of God to Israel, Behold I will hedge up thy way with thorns.—Hosea ii. 6.—Burder.

My drowsy powers, why sleep ye so?
 Awake my sluggish soul !
 Nothing hath half thy work to do,
 Yet nothing's half so dull.

NO. 251.—EXACTNESS IN WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.

xvi. 11. *A just weight and balance are the Lord's : all the weights of the bag are his work.*

The Jews were required to be exact in all their *weights and measures*, that the poor might not be defrauded. Hesychius remarks, upon this point, as a reason for such great care, that what the possession of a field or house is to a wealthy man, that the measure of corn or wine, or the weight of bread is to the poor, who have daily need of such things for the support of life. The Jewish Doctors assert, that it was a constitution of their wise men, for the preventing of all frauds in these matters, that no weights, balances, or measures, should be made of any metal, as of iron, lead, or tin, which were liable to rust, or might be bent, or easily impaired ; but of marble, stone, or glass, which were less subject to be abused.

Lewis.

A just weight is the Lord's, made by his direction and appointment, so that no man can corrupt or alter them without violating God's rights and authority, and incurring his displeasure : and the balance of public justice in the hands of the Magistrates should be, like the judgments of the Lord, perfectly correct. All the weights of the bag are his work.

NO. 252.—METHOD OF EATING AMONG THE ARABS.

xix. 24. *A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.*

Le Bruyn informs us, that the Arabs, in eating their milk, use no spoons. They dip their hands into the milk, which is placed in a wooden bowl before them, and sup it out of the palms of their hands. He says, that he saw five or six Arabs eating milk together after this manner, on the side of the Nile, as he was going up that river to Cairo; and D'Arvieux informs us, that they eat their pottage in the same manner.

It is reasonable to suppose, that the same usage obtained anciently among the Jews, and that Solomon refers to it in the words of our text. Notwithstanding the translators have rendered the original word *the bosom*, yet it is confessed that the word every where else signifies a *pot* or *dish*, or something like it, and can only by metaphor be applied to the bosom. The learned were induced to depart from the well-known meaning of the word, because they were unacquainted with Eastern manners; but now the testimony of travellers makes that perfectly clear which had appeared so very obscure. *The slothful man*, though he has dipped his hand into the milk or pottage, will not submit to the fatigue of lifting it to his mouth. Strong painting this, indeed, but perfectly in the Oriental taste. Solomon repeats this maxim, with some variation of expression—chap. xxvi. ver. 15—*The slothful hideth his hand in his bosom, it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth.*—Harmer.



NO. 253.—THE BURTHEN OF GUILT.

xxi. 8. *The way of man is foward and strange.*

This passage, according to the common interpretation, is very obscure. The original Hebrew words are used to signify a man laden with guilt and crimes, and that his way is not *foward and strange*, but unsteady or continually varying; in which expression there is a most beautiful allusion to a beast which is so over-burthened that he cannot keep in the strait road, but is continually tottering and staggering, first to the right hand; and then to the left.—*Parkhurst.*

NO. 254.—ARBOURS UPON THE HOUSE-TOP.

xxi. 9. *It is better to dwell in a corner of the house-top, than with a brawling woman in a wide house.*

During the summer season it was usual to sleep on the tops of the houses, which were flat, and properly guarded by a parapet wall; for this purpose they were accommodated with little arbours and wicker-work closets; which, however agreeable in the dry part of the year, would prove much otherwise when it rained. To be limited to such a place, and have no other apartment to live in, must be very inconvenient; but to such circumstances Solomon probably alludes.—“It is better to have no other habitation than an arbour on the *house-top*, and be there exposed to the wet of winter, than to dwell in a commodious house with a brawling woman; for her contentions are a continual dropping, and, wide as the house may be, you'll not be able to avoid them”—*Harmer.*

NO. 255.—DANGEROUS CHASMS IN THE EAST.

xxii. 14. *The mouth of strange women is a deep pit.*

Maundrell, describing the passage out of the jurisdiction of the Bassa of Aleppo into that of Tripoli, tells us, that the road was rocky and uneven, but attended with variety. He says, “we descended into a low valley, at the bottom of which is a fissure into the earth, of a great depth ; but withal so narrow, that it is not discernible to the eye ’till you arrive just upon it ; though to the ear a notice is given of it, at a great distance, by reason of the noise of a stream running down into it from the hills. We could not guess it to be less than thirty yards deep ; but it is so narrow, that a small arch, not four yards over, lands you on its other side. They call it the Sheik’s Wife ; a name given it from a woman of that quality, who fell into it and perished.” Probably Solomon might allude to some such dangerous place, in comparing a whore to a *deep pit*.—*Harmer.*

NO. 256.—ANCIENT LAND-MARKS.

xxii. 28. *Remove not the ancient land-mark.*

Before the use of fences, landed property was marked out by stones or posts, set up so as to ascertain the divisions of family estates. It was easy to remove one of these *land-marks*, and set it in a different place ; and thus the dishonest man enlarged his own estate by contracting that of his neighbour. The *land-marks* among the Romans were held very sacred, and at last were deified. Numa Pompilius commanded offerings of broth, cakes, and first-fruits, to be made to those *land-marks* ; and Ovid informs us, that it was customary to sacrifice a lamb to them,

and sprinkle them with its blood. From Tibullus it appears, that they sometimes adorned them with flowers and garlands.—

Revere each antique stone bedeck'd with flowers,
That bounds the field, or points the doubtful way.

GRAINGER.

It appears from Juvenal, that annual oblations were made to them :—

If any rogue vexatious suits advance
Against me for my known inheritance,
Enter by violence my fruitful grounds,
Or take the sacred land-mark from my bounds,
Those bounds, which with possession and with prayer,
And offered cakes, have been my annual care.

DRYDEN.

The Romans had no determined punishment for those who removed the ancient land-marks: sometimes they were sentenced to pecuniary fines, or corporeal punishment: persons of quality were sometimes exiled when found guilty; and if slaves were known to have done it with an evil design, they were put to death.—Clarke.

NO. 257.—CANDIOTS, GREAT DRINKERS OF WINE.

xxiii. 30. *They that tarry long at the wine.*

Dandini informs us, that it was the practice of tipplers, not merely to tarry long over the bottle, but over the wine-cask. “The goodness of the wine of Candia renders the Candiots great drinkers; and it often happens, that two or three great drinkers will sit down together at the foot of a cask, from whence they will not depart ‘till they have emptied it.” *Wo unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they*

*may follow strong drink, that continue until night,
'till wine inflame them.—Isa. v. 11.—Burder.*

NO. 258.—COMPASSION SHEWN TO CRIMINALS.

xxiv. 11. *If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain.*

It was allowed among the Jews that if any person could offer any thing in favor of a prisoner, after sentence was passed, he might be heard prior to the execution: and therefore it was usual, as the Mishni shews, that when a man was led to execution, a crier went before and proclaimed, “This man is now going to be executed for such a crime, and such and such are witnesses against him; whoever knows him to be innocent, let him come forth and make it appear.”—

Doddridge.

That mercy I to others show
That mercy show to me.

Pope.

NO. 259.—SNOW USED IN WINE TO COOL IT.

xxv. 13. *As the cold of snow in the time of harvest,
so is a faithful messenger to them that send him.*

Dr. Pococke says, that the people of Damascus put snow into their wine; which, he supposes, is not so wholesome a way as that of the Europeans, who only cool their liquors with it. Gejerus doubts whether the custom was so ancient as the days of Solomon; but the language before us puts the matter out of question. The royal preacher could not speak of a fall of snow in the time of harvest; that must have been incommoding, instead of pleasurable, which it

is supposed to be: he must be understood to speak of liquids cooled by snow.

Jacobus de Vitriaco says, that the snow of Lebanon was celebrated for this purpose. He says, that snow is rarely found in the Holy Land, except in very high mountains, such as Libanus; but that through the summer, and even in the dog-days, snow, of an extreme cold nature, is carried from Mount Libanus, two or three days' journey, that being mixed with wine it may make it cold as ice. He says, the snow is kept from melting by being covered up with straw. It appears, that the snow of this mountain was in high estimation in the time of the Prophet Jeremiah; and probably for the same purpose.—*Jer. xviii. 14.*—*Harmer.*

The mixing of snow with wine in the sultry time of harvest is pleasing and refreshing: so a successful messenger revives the spirit of his master who sent him, and who was ready to faint from an apprehension of his failure.—*Burder.*

NO. 260.—PERFUMES USED AT FRIENDLY VISITS.

xxvii. 9. Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart.

At the close of a visit in the East, it is common to sprinkle rose or some other sweet-scented water on the guests, and to perfume them with aloes-wood, which is brought last, and serves for a sign that it is time for a stranger to take leave. M. Savary says, that in Egypt, towards the conclusion of a visit, a slave, holding in his hand a silver plate, on which precious essences are burning, approaches the visitors, each of whom, in turn, *perfumes* his beard. They then pour rose-water on the head and hands, after which it is usual to withdraw.

Maundrell says, that the method of using the aloes wood is, they have a small silver chafing-dish, covered with a lid, full of holes, and fixed upon a handsome plate; in this they put some fresh coals, and upon them a piece of lignum aloes ; and then, shutting it up, the smoke immediately ascends, with a grateful odour, through the cover. Maillet says, that they covered him with rich cloth, that he might the better receive the perfume.—*Burder.*

Sir J. Chardin says, that it is the common custom of the East to have censers at their feasts ; and perfumes are much more common there than in Europe. Perhaps the word *perfume* comprehends the waters distilled from roses and odoriferous flowers, as well as the smoke arising from the burning of fragrant things.

Hasselquist says, that the Egyptians lay flowers of jessamine, narcissus, &c. in oil, and so make an odoriferous ointment, which those who love perfumes apply to the head, nose, and beard. This appears to be the most ancient way of using perfumes in a liquid form, and is as old as the days of Moses. To some of these customs, so calculated to refresh and exhilarate, the words of Solomon may have an allusion.—*Harmer.*

NO. 261.—POUNDING MEN IN MORTARS.

xxvii. 22. *Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him.*

Fanaticism has enacted in Turkey, in favor of the Ulemats,* that their goods shall never be confiscated, nor themselves put to death but by being bruised in a mortar. The honor of being treated in so distin-

* Lawyers.

guished a manner may not, perhaps, be sensibly felt by every one. Baron de Tott informs us, that the Mufti irritated Sultan Osman to such a degree, that he ordered the mortars to be replaced; which had been thrown down. This order produced its wished-for influence upon the Ulemats, who were terrified, and submitted.

Knolles, in his Turkish History, says, that some of the guards of the town, who suffered Prince Cereskie to escape, were pounded in great mortars of iron, in which they usually pound their rice, to reduce it to meal.—*Calmet.*

— be wise with speed :
A fool at forty is a fool indeed.

YOUNG.

NO. 262.—MILK, A GENERAL DIET IN THE EAST.

xxvii. 27. *Thou shalt have goats' milk enough for thy food, for the food of thy household, and for maintenance for thy maidens.*

Russell tells us, that *milk* is a great part of the diet of the Eastern people ; and that their *goats* are chiefly kept for this purpose ; that they yield it in no inconsiderable quantity ; and that it is sweet and well tasted.

At Aleppo they are chiefly supplied with *goats'* milk from the beginning of April to September , and the other part of the year they are supplied with *cows'* milk. As their *cows* are kept at the gardens, and fed with the refuse, the milk generally tastes so strong of garlick or cabbage-leaves, as to be very disagreeable. If we suppose the same difference to have existed in Judea in the time of Solomon—then

the language before us may be designed to express the superior quality of goats' milk to that of any other kind in that country.—*Harmer.*

NO. 263.—METHOD OF CHURNING IN THE EAST.

xxx. 33. *The churning of milk bringeth forth butter.*

The ancient way of making *butter*, in Arabia and Palestine, was probably nearly the same as is still practised by the Bedouen Arabs, and Moors in Barbary, which is thus described by Dr. Shaw:—“ Their method of making butter is, by putting the milk or cream into a goat’s skin, turned inside out, which they suspend from one side of the tent to the other ; and then pressing it to and fro, in one uniform direction, they quickly occasion the separation of the unctuous and wheyey parts.” There is another way of *churning* in the Levant, which is by a man’s treading upon the skin.—*Harmer.*

NO. 264.—INDUSTRY OF EASTERN FEMALES.

xxxi. 18. *Her candle goeth not out by night.*

There is a passage in Virgil, which may serve as an illustration of this text, and which bears so great a resemblance to it, that it might almost pass for a poetical imitation:—

Night was now sliding in her middle course :
The first repose was finish’d : when the Dame,
Who by her distaff’s slender art subsists,
Wakes the spread embers of the sleeping fire,
Night adding to her work ; and calls her maids
To their long tasks, by lighted tapers urg’d.

TRAPP.

Dr. Guys says, “ Embroidery is the constant employment of the Greek women. Those who follow it

for a living are employed in it from morning 'till night; as are also their daughters and their slaves.—

Burder.

ECCLESIASTES.

NO. 265.—MANNER OF MARRING FIELDS.

iii. 5. *A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together.*

WHEN the Israelites were ordered to *marr* every good piece of land with *stones*—2 Kings iii. 19. it is not easy to conceive how this was to be done, to any purpose, without giving more trouble to Israel to gather stones and carry them on their lands, than to the Moabites to gather them up and carry them off again. It is probable, that the Israelites did that, nationally and as victors, which was frequently done by private persons in those countries, in ancient times, by way of revenge. It was common among the Arabians, to place stones in the grounds of those with whom they were at variance, as a warning, that if any person dared to till that field, he should infallibly be slain by the contrivance of those who placed the stones there. This malicious practice is thought to have had its origin in Arabia Petrea.

If the Israelites, as victors who could prescribe what laws they thought proper to those whom they had conquered, placed such stones in the Moabitish grounds, as interdicting them from tillage, on pain of their owners being destroyed, then, without much trouble, they could effectually marr the fields, as long as their power over Moab lasted.

Perhaps, the *time to cast away stones*, and the *time to gather stones together*, mentioned by the royal preacher, is to be understood in like manner;—that they should give to nations with which there had been contests, the mark of perfect reconciliation, or continue upon them some token of displeasure and resentment.—*Harmer.*

NO. 266.—DIFFERENT ARTICLES OF FUEL.

vii. 6. *As the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool.*

Dr. Russell says, that at Aleppo they use wood and charcoal in their rooms, but heat their baths with cow-dung, the parings of fruit, &c. Pitts says, that there is such a scarcity of wood at Grand Cairo, that they commonly heat their ovens with horse or cow-dung; and that the little wood they have is brought from parts bordering upon the Black Sea, and sold by weight. D'Arvieux says, that the children are employed to gather up the dung and put it against a wall to dry, from whence they take it, either to bake with or to warm themselves.—The bread thus baked has a disagreeable taste.

Dr. Russell says, that the Arabs carefully collect the dung of the sheep and camel, as well as that of the cow; and that the dung made use of in the bagnios they generally carry out of the city, and lay it in great heaps to dry. When it is dried in the town adjoining to the bagnios it is very offensive, especially when it rains, though it is stacked, pressed hard together, and thatched at the top. It is probable, that this stock of firing is laid up in some out-house, as by the poor of this country who make use of it.

When Jeremiah complains, *they that were brought up in scarlet, embrace dung-hills*—Lam. iv. 5. it appears to mean, that such as had been covered with robes of magnificence, were forced, by the destruction of their palaces, to take up their abode in places designed for the reception of this sort of turf, and to sit upon those heaps of dried dung. If cow-dung were much used in Palestine for fuel, its extreme slowness in burning must make the quickness of the fire of *thorns* very observable, and give a liveliness to the passage before us.—*Harmer.*

NO. 267.—DEAD FLIES INJURE OINTMENT.

x. 1. *Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour.*

Scheuchzer says, that apothecaries take care to prevent flies from coming to their syrups and other fermentable preparations. For in all insects there is an acrid volatile salt, which, mixed with sweet or even alkaline substances, excites them to a brisk intestine motion, disposes them to fermentation, and to putrescence itself; by which the more volatile principles fly off, leaving the grosser behind: at the same time the taste and odour are changed, the agreeable to fetid, and the sweet to insipid.—*Burder.*

NO. 268.—DISCOURSES DELIVERED IN PUBLIC ASSEMBLIES.

xii. 11. *The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd.*

It is most probable, that the assemblies here referred to, were for the purpose of pronouncing dis-

courses of an eloquent and philosophical nature. Such assemblies have been common in those countries since the days of Solomon, and even in his time might not be unknown. This way of reciting compositions in prose and verse, has been as frequent among the Orientals, as it was anciently among the Romans, and as it is now in our academies. The Arabians have many books containing discourses of this kind ; which are looked upon by them as master-pieces of eloquence. The most learned of the Arabian grammarians said, that the discourses of Hariri ought not to be written but on silk. The *masters* were the persons who distinguished themselves by the superiority of their composition, and conveyed exquisite instruction and pleasure to the mind. Their words are compared to *goads* and *nails*. The *shepherd* here spoken of, means God, the father of lights, from whom every good and perfect gift descends.—James i. 17.—*Harmer.*

CANTICLES.

NO. 269.—TENTS BLACK AND COMELY.

i. 5. *I am black but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.*

As the brown among Laban's sheep were to be Jacob's hire, because they were much less common ; so for the same reason were the spotted and speckled among the goats, because they were generally black.

D'Arvieux says, that the tents of the Turcomans are white ; and those of the Turks green ; but that

the tents of the Arabs are universally *black*. To these tents the spouse compares herself—*I am black as the tents of Kedar*. Curtains of goats' hair were directed for the tabernacle; and the Israelitish women appear to have been well acquainted with the manner of spinning it; from whence it has been conjectured, that the tents of Israel in the wilderness were of the same fabric.

It appears, that the spouse represents herself black, as to her outward aspect, but possessed of internal qualifications, beautiful as the *curtains of Solomon*. Egmont and Hayman tell us, that the Turkish tents are both convenient and magnificent. Those belonging to the Grand Seignior were exceedingly splendid, and lined with a rich silk stuff. One of his tents is said to have cost twenty-five thousand piastres: it was made in Persia, and intended as a present to the Grand Seignior. The outside of this tent was not remarkable; but it was lined with a single piece, made of camels' hair, and beautifully decorated with festoons, and sentences in the Turkish language.

Nadir Shah had a very superb tent, covered on the outside with scarlet broad-cloth, and lined within with violet-colored satin, ornamented with a great variety of animals, flowers, &c. formed entirely of pearls and precious stones. If Solomon used tents at all, we may be sure that they were extremely magnificent.—*Harmer*.

NO. 270.—SHADE, AN ARTICLE IN EASTERN LUXURY.

ii. 3. *I sat down under his shadow with great delight; and his fruit was sweet to my taste!*

Mr. Wood informs us, that shade is an essential

article in Oriental luxury. Dr. Pococke found the Patriarch of the Maronites and a Bishop sitting under a tree. Any tree that is thick and spreading serves the purpose; but it must certainly be an addition to their enjoying of themselves, when the tree is of a fragrant nature, as well as shady, such as the citron. Travellers have made use of plane-trees, walnut-trees, &c. Egmont and Hayman were entertained with coffee at Mount Sinai, under the orange-trees of the garden.

The people of those countries not only frequently sit under shady trees, and take collations under them, but sometimes the *fruit* of those trees under which they sit is shaken down upon them. Dr. Pococke says, when he was at Sidon, he was entertained in a garden, in the shade of some apricot-trees, and the fruit of them was shaken upon him; which appears to have been designed as an agreeable addition to the entertainment.—*Harmer.*

Beneath his cooling shade I sit
To shield me from the burning heat;
Of heav'ly fruit he spreads a feast
To feed my eyes and please my taste.

WATTS.

NO. 271.—FOXES DESTRUCTIVE TO VINEYARDS.

ii. 15. *Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines; for our vines have tender grapes.*

Foxes are observed by many authors to be fond of *grapes*, and to make great havoc in vineyards.—Aristophanes compares soldiers to foxes: soldiers spoil countries as foxes do the vineyards. Galen tells us, that hunters did not scruple to eat the flesh of foxes in

autumn, when they were grown fat with feeding on grapes.—*Burder.*

NO. 272.—PERFUMES USED AT EASTERN MARRIAGES.

iii. 6. *Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness, like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?*

The use of perfumes at Eastern marriages is common, and, upon great occasions, very profuse. Not only are the garments scented 'till, in the Psalmist's language, they *smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia,* but it is customary for virgins to meet, and lead the procession with silver-gilt pots of *perfumes*; and the air around is rendered fragrant by the burning of aromatics in the windows of all the houses before which the procession is to pass. So liberally were these perfumes burnt, that there arose from them *pillars of smoke.*

Lady Montague, in speaking of the reception of a beautiful young Turkish bride at the bagnio, says, “two virgins met her at the door; two others filled silver-gilt pots with perfumes, and began the procession; the rest following in pairs to the number of thirty. In this order they marched round the three large rooms of the bagnio.”

Mallet, describing the entrance of the Ambassadors of an Eastern Monarch, sent to propose marriage to an Egyptian Queen, says, “the streets through which they passed were strewed with flowers; and precious odours, burning in the windows, embalmed the air.”

Harmer.

NO. 273.—CROWNS USED AT MARRIAGES.

iii. 11. *The crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals.*

Such a ceremony as this was customary among the Jews at their marriages. Maillet informs us, that the crowns were made of different materials. Describing the custom, as practised by the members of the Greek church who now live in Egypt, he says, that the parties to be married are placed opposite to a reading desk, upon which the book of the gospels is placed, and upon the book two crowns, which are made of such materials as people choose; of flowers, of cloth, or of tinsel. The Priest introduces all the Patriarchs of the Old Testament into his benedictions and prayers: after this, he places the crowns—the one on the head of the bridegroom, and the other on that of the bride, and covers them both with a veil. After some other ceremonies, the Priest concludes the whole by taking off their crowns, and dismissing them with prayer.—*Burder.*

NO. 274.—UNVEILING AN EYE IN CONVERSATION.

iv. 9. *Thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes.*

Mr. Williams says, “there is a singularity in this imagery which has much perplexed the critics; and perhaps it is not possible to ascertain the meaning of the poet beyond a doubt. Supposing the royal bridegroom to have had a profile or side view of his bride, only one eye, or one side of her neck-lace, would have been observable; yet this charms and overpowers him. Tertullian mentions a custom in the East, of women unveiling only *one eye* in conversation, while they

keep the other covered: and Niebuhr mentions a like custom in some parts of Arabia. This brings us nearly to the same interpretation as the above."—

Burder.

O disclose thy lovely face!
Quicken all my drooping powers!
Gasps my fainting soul for grace,
As a thirsty land for showers:
Hasté, my Lord, no more delay!
Come, my Saviour, come away!

NO. 275.—HEAPS OF HERBS USED FOR A BED.

v. 13. *His cheeks are as a bed of spices.*

Mr. Burder says, that the Ancients, by way of indulgence, used to repose themselves on large heaps of fragrant herbs, leaves, and flowers. Among others, we may take an instance from Anacreon:—

Reclin'd at ease on this soft bed,
With fragrant leaves of myrtle spread
And flow'ry lote, I'll now resign
My care's, and quaff the rosy wine.

FAWKES.

NO. 276.—BEAUTY COMPARED TO THE MOON.

vi. 10. *Fair as the moon.*

This manner of describing beauty still prevails in the East; D'Herbelot informs us, that the later writers of those countries have given to the Patriarch Joseph the title of the *moon* of Canaan; that is, in their style, the most perfect beauty that ever appeared above the horizon of Judea. Many Eastern writers have applied the comparison particularly to the females of those countries.—*Burder.*

NO. 277.—DESCRIPTION OF AN EASTERN COTTAGE.

- i. 8. *The daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers.*

IT appears, that these lodges were little temporary huts, covered with boughs, straw, and sods; which were to be a shelter from the heat by day, and the cold and dews by night. These were occupied by the watchman who kept the *garden*, or *vineyard*, during the season that the fruit was ripening.—Job xxvii. 18.; and under these, Chardin informs us, they used to sell the produce of their gardens, such as *cucumbers*, melons, grapes, &c. It is probable, that the Eastern people were obliged to have a constant watch in their gardens, not only to guard them from the incursions of men, but also from the destruction of beasts.

Hasselquist says, that the jackal is very common in Palestine, especially during the vintage, and is often known to destroy whole *vineyards* and gardens of cucumbers. Chardin says, that the Persians and Turks display a great fondness for their fruits as soon as they approach to ripeness, the great dryness and temperature of the air preventing flatulencies.

The Holy Mountain appears to be deserted as a cottage at the close of the vintage, in which nobody dwells, and of which no one takes any care; and appears despicable as a *lodge in a garden of cucumbers*.—*Burder, &c.*

NO. 278.—SIN COMPARED TO SCARLET.

- i. 18. *Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*

The Jews had a custom of tying one shred of scarlet cloth to the horns of the scape-goat, and another to the gate of the temple, or to the top of the rock where the goat was lost; and they concluded, that if they turned *white*, as they say it usually did, the sins of Israel were forgiven; as it is written, *though your sins have been as scarlet they shall be as wool*. They add, that for forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, the scarlet cloth never changed color at all; which is a fair confession, that, having rejected the substance, the shadow stood them in no stead.—*Henry*.

The color of scarlet was produced from a worm or insect, which grew in a coccus or excrescence of a shrub of the ilex kind, like the cochineal worm in the opuntia of America. There is a shrub of this kind that grows in Provence and Languedoc, and produces the like insect, called the kermes oak, from kermes, the Arabic word for this color, whence our word crimson is derived. To discharge these strong colors is impossible to human art or power; but to the grace and power of God all things, even such as are much more difficult, are possible and easy.—*Lowth*.

NO. 279.—RUINS FREQUENTED BY VERMIN.

ii. 20, 21. *In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they have made, each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; to go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks.*

Thevenot, describing the open pyramid, says, that it is so much infested with *bats*, that they sometimes extinguish the candles which are used in examining

that ancient building. In one particular hole they swarmed so amazingly, that a Scotch gentleman, who alone had courage to descend into it, declared, he was afraid that he should have been eaten up by them.

Egmont and Hayman inform us, that in addition to bats, they found owls, snakes, and other reptiles, in the pyramids, for which reason they thought it necessary to fire off some pistols before they ventured into them, that these creatures might be frightened away to their lurking-places. Rauwolf, in his account of Babylon, tells us, that some of its ruins are so full of vermin, that they have bored holes through them, so as to render it dangerous to approach within half a mile, except in two months in the winter, when they come not out of their holes. Mr. Harmer thinks the Prophet speaks of this sort of animals, rather than of *moles*, which a single Hebrew term is supposed to express—Lev. xi. 30. but which have no connection with ruins. The thought of the Prophet appears to be, that idolators in their flight shall cast the objects of their worship into old ruined places, to secrete them from their enemies, where they should be the companions of bats and of those which are wont to bore holes in ruins.

The country of Judea, being mountainous and rocky, appears to be full of caverns. At Engedi there was a cave so large that David with six hundred men hid themselves in the sides of it, and Saul entered the mouth of the cave without perceiving that any one was there.—1 Sam. xxiv. Some of these are natural, and some are artificial.—Judges vi. 2. Strabo speaks of a cavern that would hold four thousand men. *To go into the clefts of the rocks, and*

into the tops of the ragged rocks, was a familiar image to express terror and consternation. They shall say to the mountains, cover us; and to the hills, fall on us.—Hosea x. 8.—Harmer.

NO. 280.—FEMALE ORNAMENTS WORN IN THE EAST.

iii. 16. *Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched-forth necks, and wanton eyes, walking, and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion.*

Rauwolf informs us, that the Arab women wear rings about their legs, which, in their stepping, slip up and down and make a great noise.

Chardin says, that in Persia, in Arabia, and in the Indies, they wear silver or golden rings about their ankles, which are full of little bells. Children and girls take particular pleasure in giving them motion; in order to which, they walk with quickness. Pitts says, that the women of pleasure at Cairo wear their hair in tresses behind, reaching down to their heels, with little bells, or something like it, at the end, which swinging against their heels make a *tinkling* sound as they travel: hence he was led to think, that the Prophet might allude to a fashion of this description. Lady Montague says, that the Eastern females nourish their hair with great fondness; that it hangs in full length behind, divided into tresses, braided with pearl or ribband. She says, she has counted a hundred and ten tresses worn by one lady. It appears from 1 Cor. xi. 14. that it was common for women to wear their hair long, but the men short;

and that the Apostle thought this a natural distinction: but this was not always the custom, because long hair was esteemed a beauty in Absalom. The Jewish females were threatened—v. 24. that *instead of well-set hair*, there should be *baldness*; so that they should resemble women in the deep mourning of captivity;* and instead of having their heads adorned with a rich embroidered handkerchief, they should be smitten with a scab.—*Harmer.*

NO. 281.—SITTING ON THE GROUND, A POSTURE OF DEEP DISTRESS.

vii.26. And she being desolate shall sit upon the ground.

Sitting on the ground was a posture that denoted mourning and deep distress.—Lam. ii. 8. A remarkable instance of this we have in the medal struck by Vespasian, on the subjugation of the Jews. On the reverse is seen a palm-tree, and a woman sitting on the ground at the foot of it, with her head leaning on her arm, weeping, and at her feet different pieces of armour; with this legend,—“*Judea capta.*” Thus was exactly fulfilled the saying of the Prophet, *and she being desolate shall sit upon the ground.*

The Psalmist describes the Jews lamenting their captivity in the same pensive posture. *By the waters of Babylon we sat down, and wept when we remembered thee, O Zion.*—*Burder, &c.*

Like Salem's harps,

Once fraught with richest harmony of praise,
Hung in sad silence by Euphrates' stream,
Upon the mournful willows! there they wept,
Thy captive people wept—O God! when thought
To bitter memory recall'd the songs—
The dulcet songs of Sion.

DODD,

* Deut. xxii. 12. 13.

NO. 282.—BEES LED BY A HISS OR WHISTLE.

v. 26. *He will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth.*

Bp. Lowth informs us, that this metaphor is taken from the practice of those that keep bees, who draw them out of their hives into the fields, and lead them back again, by a *hiss* or a *whistle*.

Maillet says, that Egypt abounds with bees; and great is the attention which is paid to them. The waters which flow into Egypt during the months of June, July, and August, retire towards the end of October; and when the Nile upon its decrease gives the peasants an opportunity of sowing the lands, sainfoin is one of the first things sown, and one of the most profitable. As the Upper Egypt is hotter than the Lower, and the inundation goes sooner off the lands, the sainfoin appears there first; hence they send their bee-hives from all parts of Egypt, that the bees may enjoy, as soon as possible, the richness of the flowers. The hives, upon their arrival at the farther end of Egypt, are placed one upon another, in the form of pyramids, in boats prepared for their reception. The bees feed in the fields until they have collected all the honey and wax for two or three leagues round; then they fall down the stream for two or three leagues, and leave them there a sufficient time to gather the riches of that canton. At length, about the beginning of February, after having gone the whole length of Egypt, they arrive at the sea, from whence they are conducted to their usual place of abode. There is a difference of six weeks in the vegetation of Upper and Lower Egypt.

Their general time of sowing is in October and November, and their harvest is in March and April.—

Harmer.

The bee

Sits on the bloom extracting liquid sweet
Deliciously, and builds her waxen cells
With honey stored.

MILTON.

All creatures are subject to divine influence. The Lord hath no need to sound the trumpet or beat the drum; a *hiss* or whistle is sufficient to rouse the universe. *Who would not fear thee, O King of Nations?*

NO. 283.—THE EXCELLENCE OF ANCIENT CAVALRY.

v. 28. *Their horses' hoofs shall be counted like flint.*

The shoeing of *horses*, with iron plates nailed to the hoof, is quite a modern practice, and was unknown to the Ancients, as appears from the silence of the Greek and Roman writers, especially those that treat of horse-medicine, who could not have passed over a matter so obvious, and of such importance, that now the whole science takes its name from it, being called by us farriery. The horse-shoes of leather and of iron, which are mentioned,—the silver and the gold shoes, with which Nero and Poppea shod their mules, used occasionally to preserve the hoofs of delicate cattle, or for vanity, were of a very different kind: they inclosed the whole hoof, as in a case, or as a shoe does a man's foot, and were bound or tied on. For this reason the strength, firmness, and solidity of a horse's hoof was of much greater importance with them than with us, and was esteemed one of the first praises of a fine horse. For want of this artificial

defence to the foot, which our horses have, Amos* speaks of it as a thing as much impracticable to make horses run upon a hard rock, as to plough up the same rock with oxen. These circumstances must be taken into consideration, in order to give us a full notion of the propriety and force of the image by which the Prophet sets forth the strength and excellence of the Babylonish cavalry, which made a great part of the strength of the Assyrian army.—*Lowth.*

NO. 284.—CUSTOM OF SEALING UP THE EYES.

vi. 10. *Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes.*

Dr. Russell informs us, that sealing up the *eyes* is one of the solemnities at a Jewish wedding at Aleppo. He says, they fasten the eye-lids together with gum, and the bridegroom, if he remembers right, is the person that opens the bride's eyes at the appointed time.

Sir T. Roe's Chaplain says, that it is at times used as a punishment. He tells us of a son of the Great Mogul, whom he had seen, that had been cast into prison by his father, where his *eyes* were sealed up, by something being put before them which might not be taken off. After the expiration of three years the seal was taken away, that he might enjoy the light, though, from principles of jealousy, he would not grant him his liberty.

Calmet thinks, that by the sealing or sewing up of the eyes of the young Prince, we are to understand a hood or veil, which probably covered both his head and face.

* Chap. vi. 12.

Olearius tells us, that Shah Abas, the celebrated Persian Monarch, ordered a quantity of opium to be given every day to his grandson, who was to be his successor, in order to render him stupid, that he might not have any reason to apprehend danger from him. Mr. Harmer says, "I do not imagine there is an allusion to three different operations here. Two things possibly might be intended; and *shutting* the eyes mean sealing them: but perhaps one only is meant—the stupifying them." See the language of St. Paul, in the eleventh to the Romans.

He from thick films shall purge the visual ray,
And on the sightless eye-ball pour the day.

POPE.

NO. 285.—WATERS EMBLEMATICAL OF GOVERNMENT.

viii. 6. 7. *Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah, that go softly; now therefore, behold the Lord bringeth upon them the waters of the river strong and many.*

Shiloah was a small fountain and brook, just without Jerusalem, which supplied a pool within the city, for the use of the inhabitants, and was an apt emblem of the kingdom of David, much reduced in its apparent strength, yet supported by the blessing of God. It is finely contrasted with the waters of the Euphrates, great, rapid, and impetuous—the image of the Babylonian empire, which God threatens to bring down like a mighty flood upon all those apostates, as a punishment for their manifold iniquities. Juvenal, inveighing against the corruption of Rome, by the importation of Asiatic manners, says, that the Orontes has long been discharging itself in the Tiber. Virgil, to express the submission of some of the Eastern countries to

the Roman arms, says, that the waters of Euphrates now flowed more humbly and gently.—*Lowth.*

NO. 286.—ARMOUR BURNT IN HONOR TO THE GODS.

ix. 5. Every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire.

The burning of heaps of armour gathered from the field of battle, as an offering to the god supposed to be the giver of victory, was a custom which prevailed among some heathen nations; and the Romans used it as an emblem of peace. A medal struck by Vespasian, on finishing his wars, both at home and abroad, represents the goddess Peace, holding an olive-branch in one hand, and with a lighted torch in the other setting fire to a heap of armour. Virgil mentions the custom:—

Would heav'n, said he, my strength and youth recall,
Such as I was beneath Preneste's wall—
Then, when I made the foremost foes retire,
And set whole heaps of conquer'd shields on fire.

DRYDEN.

Lowth.

Paulus Emilius, after his various conquests, caused all the spoils, which he did not think fit to carry to Rome, to be piled up in one great heap; bows, quivers, arrows, javelins; in a word, arms of all sorts; and with a torch in his hand, he first set fire to them himself, and then his principal officers followed his example.—*Rollin.*

Thus the reign of the Prince of Peace will lead to the destruction of war, with all its instruments of cruelty. *O come hither, and behold the works of the*

Lord; what destruction he hath brought upon the earth. He maketh wars to cease in all the world : he breaketh the bow, and knappeth the spear in sunder, and burneth the chariots in the fire.—Psalm xlvi. 9, 10.

NO. 287.—DIVERSITY OF HOUSES IN THE EAST.

ix. 10. *The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones : the sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars.*

'The author of the history of Aly Bey informs us, that the houses of the better sort of people in Cairo are built of stone, and generally two or three stories high ; but those of the lower class are built of unburnt bricks, and only one story high.

Unburnt bricks are poor materials for building when compared with hewn stone, and stone perhaps approaching to marble ; which is the difference between the houses of the poorer Egyptians and the palaces of that country. The opposing unburnt bricks to a material so much more beautiful and durable as stone, if not marble, is placing the vaunting of Israel in a strong point of light :—*the bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones.*

The image appears to vary when the Prophet speaks of *sycamores* and *cedars*. From the demolition of houses, he seems to turn his thoughts to the destruction of their woods. The Prophet appears to refer to the Eastern way of making war, by cutting down the trees of a country. The sycamores, which grew in abundance in the low lands of Judea,* were not much esteemed ; but the cedar was reckoned a magnificent material :† therefore, say they, *the sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into*

* 1 Kings x. 27.

† 2 Sam. vii. 2,

*cedars : we will plant the precious cedar, in the room
of despicable sycamores.—Harmer.*

How applicable the language—*Why should ye be
stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more!*—
Isa. i. 5.

NO. 288.—MODE OF DRAWING UP DECREES.

x. 1. *Wo unto them that decree unrighteous decrees,
and that write grievousness which they have
prescribed.*

D'Arvieux informs us, that when an Arab wants a favor he applies to the Secretary, who draws up a decree according to the request of the party. If the Emir grants the favor, he prints his seal upon it; if not, he returns it torn to the petitioner, and dismisses him. Hence we learn wherein the wickedness of those men consisted, who wrote those decrees to be thus authenticated or annulled by great men. The latter only confirmed or rejected; whereas all the injustice and iniquity contained in those decrees originated with the petitioner and the scribe, who might so concert matters as to deceive their superiors. The Emir's Secretary never drew up any order without a present, which was expected to be proportionate to the requested favor; and he appears to have been very oppressive in his demands.—*Harmer.*

NO. 289.—WELLS OF SALVATION.

xii. 3. *With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of
salvation.*

Josephus says, that at Massada there were some hundreds of the partizans of Herod closely besieged, who, for want of water, were about to quit their posts,

but the rain which fell in one night was so abundant, as to fill their cisterns, by which means they were enabled to continue their defensive operations. With what joy must those Herodians have drawn water out of their wells and cisterns! with propriety they might be called *the wells of salvation*, because they were the means, through the interposition of Providence, of saving them out of the hands of their enemies. Thus Jonathan is said to have wrought a great *salvation* for Israel, because he was the instrument made use of by God, to effect that salvation.—1 Sam. xiv. 45.

It is certain, that the Prophet in our text alludes to the times of the Messiah, and the copious out-pouring of the influences of the Spirit of God, after a long suspension of that mercy; when many were ready to faint and to desert the best of causes; and when the tongue of slander reproached the slowness of the footsteps of God's anointed.* The describing those influences, so often compared to water and rain, by the rejoicing of such as were delivered from a distressing situation by sudden showers, which filled their reservoirs, is an image natural and lively.—*Harmer.*

O thou divine Fountain, help the reader to say, with thy servant David, *All my springs are in thee!*—
Psalm lxxxvii. 7.

Salvation! O the joyful sound,
What pleasure to our ears!
A sov'reign balm for ev'ry wound,
A cordial for our fears.

NO. 290.—SOLDIERS REGARDLESS OF BRIBES.

xiii. 17. *Behold I will stir up the Medes against*

* Psalm lxxxix. 50, 51.

them, who shall not regard silver; and as for gold, they shall not delight in it.

The meaning is, that the *Medes* were not to be induced, by large offers of gold and silver for ransom, to spare the lives of those whom they had subdued in battle; their rage and cruelty should get the better of all such motives. We have many examples in the *Iliad* and *Eneid* of the addresses of the vanquished to the pity and avarice of the vanquishers, to induce them to spare their lives.—*Burder.*

High in my dome are silver talents roll'd,
With piles of labour'd and unlabour'd gold:
These, to procure my ransom; I resign;
The war depends not on a life like mine.
One, one poor life can no such diff'rence yield,
Nor turn the mighty balance of the field.
Thy talents, (cried the Prince) thy treasur'd store,
Keep for thy sons.

PITT.

NO. 291.—DESCRIPTION OF ANCIENT BOWS.

xiii. 18. *Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces.*

Both Herodotus and Xenophon mention, that the Persians used large *bows*; and the latter particularly says, that their bows were three cubits long. They were celebrated for their archers; and it is probable, that their neighbours and allies, the Medes, dealt much in the same sort of arms. In Psalm xviii. 34. and Job xx. 24. mention is made of a bow of brass. If the Persian bows were of metal, we may easily conceive, that with a metalline bow of three cubits length, and proportionably strong, the soldiers might dash and slay the young men, the weaker and unre-

sisting part of the inhabitants, in the general carnage on taking the city.—*Lowth.*

NO. 292.—USE OF ANCIENT RUINS IN THE EAST.

xiii. 20. *Neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there, neither shall the shepherds make their fold there.*

In the East it is common for *shepherds* to make use of remaining ruins, to shelter their flocks from the heat of noon, and the dangers of the night: hence the scriptures, in describing the ruined state into which some celebrated cities were to be reduced, represent them as so desolated, that no shepherds, with their flocks, should haunt them.

Dr. Chandler, after mentioning the exquisite remains of a temple of Apollo, in Asia Minor, which were such that it was impossible, perhaps, to conceive greater beauty and majesty of ruin, says, “at evening a large flock of goats, returning to the fold, their bells tinkling, overspread the heap, climbing to browse on the shrubs and trees growing between the stones.” In another passage, speaking of Aiasaluck, generally understood to be the ancient Ephesus, he says “a herd of goats was driven to it for shelter from the sun at noon; and a noisy flight of crows from the quarries seemed to insult its silence. We heard the partridge call in the area of the theatre and of the stadium. The glorious pomp of its heathen worship is no longer remembered; and christianity, which was there nursed by Apostles, and fostered by general councils, until it increased to fulness of stature, lingers on in an existence hardly visible.” In speaking of Ephesus he says, “our horses were disposed among the walls and rubbish, with their saddles on, and a

mat was spread for us on the ground. We sat here, in the open air, while supper was preparing ; when suddenly fires began to blaze up among the bushes, and we saw the villagers collected about them in savage groups, or passing to and fro with lighted brands for torches. The flames, with the stars and a pale moon, afforded us a dim prospect of ruin and desolation. A shrill owl, called cucuvia, from its note, with a night-hawk, flitted near us ; and a jackall cried mournfully, as if forsaken by his companions on the mountain." What a lesson of moderation and humility to the conquerors of kingdoms, and the troublers of the world ! *The wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces.*—Ver. 22.—Harmer, &c.

NO. 293.—THE IDOLS OF HERMOPOLIS FALLING BEFORE
THE SAVIOUR.

xix. 1. *Behold the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt, and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence.*

Eusebius and Athanasius have recorded the following fact : that when Joseph and Mary arrived in Egypt, they took up their abode in Hermopolis, a city of the Thebais, in which was a superb temple of Serapis. Conducted by Providence, or induced by curiosity, to visit this temple, with the infant Saviour, what was their wonder and consternation, on their very entrance, to find, not only the great idol itself, but all the *dii minores* of the temple, fall prostrate before them ! The Priests fled away with horror, and the whole city was in the utmost alarm.

I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.—Shaw.

NO. 306.—HARBINGERS SENT BEFORE EASTERN MONARCHS.

xl. 3. 4. *The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert, a high-way for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain.*

This idea is taken from the practice of Eastern Monarchs, who upon an expedition, or taking a journey through a desert country, would send harbingers before them to prepare all things for their reception, and pioneers to open the passes, to level the ways, and to remove all impediments.

The account given by Diodorus Siculus of the march of Semiramis into Media and Persia, will give us a clear notion of the preparations of the way for a royal expedition.—“From thence she marched towards Ecbatane and came to the mountain called Zarkeum, which, extending many furlongs, and being full of craggy precipices and deep hollows, could not be passed without making a long circuitous rout. Being desirous therefore of leaving an immortal monument of herself, as well as to make a shorter way, she ordered the precipices to be cut down, and the hollow places to be filled up with earth; and, at a great expence, made a plain open road, which to this day is called, the road of Semiramis. Afterwards she made a progress through Persia and all her other

dominions in Asia, and wherever she came she ordered the *mountains* and craggy rocks to be cut down, and, at a vast expence, made the ways level and plain. On the other hand, in low or champaign places, she raised mounds, on which she built monuments for her deceased Generals; and sometimes whole cities. Many of these still remain, and are called, the works of Semiramis." This account throws a beauty into the prophetic declaration, which must be lost to all readers who are not acquainted with the allusion.—*Harmer.*

Hark ! a glad voice the lonely desert cheers,
Prepare the way ! a God—a God appears ;
A God—a God ! the vocal hills reply,
The rocks proclaim th' approaching Deity.
Lo, Earth receives him from the bending skies !
Sink down, ye mountains ! and ye vallies, rise !

POPE.

NO. 307.—MARKS SIGNIFICANT OF CONDITION.

xliv. 5. *And another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself with the name of Israel.*

This is an allusion to the marks which were made by punctures, rendered indelible by fire, or by staining the hand or some other part of the body, signifying the state and character of the person, and to whom he belonged. The slave was marked with the name of his master; the soldier of his commander; and the idolater with the name or ensign of his god. Procopius says, that some of the Christians imitated this practice, and "marked their wrists or arms with the sign of the cross, or with the name of Christ."—*Lowth.*

Dr. Doddridge says, that some celebrated transla-

tors understand the words a little different from our translation, and would render them *another shall write upon his hand, I am the Lord's*: they suppose it refers to a custom, which formerly prevailed in the East, of stamping the name of the General on the soldier, or that of the master on the slave. This name was sometimes borne on the forehead, and at other times on the hand.* But if we retain our own version, it will amount to nearly the same, and evidently refers to a practice sometimes resorted to among the Jews, of obliging themselves to the service of God by setting their *hand* to some written articles, emphatically expressing such a resolution. *We make a sure covenant, and write it: and our Princes, Levites, and Priests, seal unto it.*—Nehem. ix. 38.—

Burder.

NO. 308.—MANNER OF FORMING IDOLS.

xliv. 13. *The carpenter stretcheth out his rule: he marketh it out with a line, he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and maketh it after the figure of a man.*

The Prophet in these words describes the process of forming an idolatrous figure. It appears to have been done by filling a line with red chalk; stretching it over a surface; striking it, and thereby forming lines; crossing these lines, and thereby forming squares; delineating the contour of the figure in these squares; and forming it with dignified proportion and majesty.

Denton, in his travels in Egypt, gives us a figure which he found on one of the columns of the portico

* Rev. xiii. 16, 17.—vii. 2, 3.—iii. 12.

of Jentyra ; “ it was covered with stucco, and painted. The stucco being partly scaled off, gave me the opportunity of discovering lines, traced as if with red chalk. Curiosity prompted me to take away the whole of the stucco, and I found the form of the figure sketched, with corrections of the outlines : it was divided into twenty-two parts ; the separation of the thighs being in the middle of the whole height of the figure, and the head comprising rather less than a seventh part.”—*Burder.*

God greatly honored man, when he gave him a soul after the image of God : but man greatly dishonours God, when he gives him a body after the image of man.

NO. 309.—IDOLS CARRIED INTO CAPTIVITY.

xlvi. 2. *Themselves are gone into captivity.*

It was a custom among the Heathens, to carry in triumph the images of the gods of such nations as they had vanquished. Isaiah prophesies of Cyrus, that in this manner he would treat the gods of Babylon. *Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth ; their idols are laid upon the beasts, upon the cattle, and themselves are gone into captivity.* Daniel foretells of Ptolemy Euergetes, that he would carry captive into Egypt the gods of the Syrians, with their Princes,—chap. xi. ver. 8. ; and the like predictions are to be met with in Jer. xlvi. 7. and in Amos i. 15. Plutarch, in the life of Marcellus, tells us, that he took away, out of the temple of Syracuse, the most beautiful pictures and statues of their gods ; and that afterwards it became a reproach to Marcellus, and raised the indignation of other nations

against Rome, that he carried along with him, not men only, but the very gods, captive, and in triumph.—

Saurin.

According to Varro, the Heathen had upwards of three thousand deities!

NO. 310.—JUDICIAL ASTROLOGY.

xlvii. 13. *Let now the astrologers, the star-gazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee.*

The study of the heavenly bodies was so far from leading the Eastern philosophers to the knowledge of God, that it often carried them into impious practices, and all the extravagances of judicial astrology. This presumptuous science, which teaches to judge of things to come by the knowledge of the stars, and to foretel events by the situation of the planets and by their different aspects, was considered as madness and folly by the most sensible writers among the Pagans themselves.

Those *astrologers*, frequently called *Chaldeans*, affirm, that in consequence of the observations made by their ancestors, for the space of four hundred and seventy thousand years, they know by the aspect and combination of the stars and planets, at the instant of a child's birth, what will be his genius, temper, the constitution of his body, his actions, all the events of his life, and the period of his death. Cicero, in refuting this extravagant opinion, asks the reason why of all the vast number of children that are born in the same moment, and under the same aspect of the same stars, there are not two of them whose lives and fortunes resemble each other? He further enquires,

whether that great number of men that perished at the battle of Cannæ, and died of one and the same death, were all born under the same constellations?

Two of our greatest philosophers, Gassendus and Rohault, have inveighed with energy against this pretended science ; and have demonstrated it to be void both of principles and experience. According to the system of astrologers, the heaven is divided into twelve equal parts ; which parts are taken, not according to the poles of the world, but according to those of the zodiac, and have each of them its attribute, as riches, knowledge, parentage, &c. The most important and decisive portion is that which is next under the horizon, and is called the ascendant, because it is ready to ascend, and appear above the horizon, when the child comes into the world. The planets are divided into the propitious, the malignant, and the mixed : the aspects of those planets which are only certain distances from one another, are likewise considered either happy or unhappy. The critical moment, and that on which all their predictions depend, is that of the birth. And why not as well the moment of conception ? why have the stars no influence during the period of child-bearing ? or, considering the rapidity of the heavenly bodies, who can be sure of hitting the precise determinate moment, without which the whole scheme is overthrown ?

As for experience, they have still less reason to flatter themselves on that side. Experience must consist in observations founded upon events that have always come to pass in the same manner, whenever the planets were found in the same situation. Now it is unanimously agreed, by all astronomers, that several

thousands of years must pass before any such situation of the stars, as they would imagine, can twice happen; and it is very certain, that the state in which the heavens will be to-morrow has never yet been since the creation of the world.—*Rollin.*

Let all the baleful planets shed
Their mingled curses round my head,
Their mingled curses I despise,
Let but the great th' eternal King
Look through the clouds and bless me with his eyes,

Mrs. ROWE.

NO. 311.—ENSIGNS GRAVEN ON THE HAND.

xlix. 16. *I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.*

This is an allusion to the Eastern custom of tracing out on their hands, not the names, but the sketches of certain eminent cities or places, and then rubbing them with the powder of the hennah or cypress, and thereby making the marks perpetual. Maundrell describes the custom after this sort:—“the next morning nothing extraordinary passed, which gave many of the pilgrims leisure to have their arms marked with the usual ensigns of Jerusalem. The artists, who undertake the operation, do it in this manner: they have stamps in wood of any figure that you desire, which they first print off upon your arm with powder of charcoal; then taking two very fine needles tied close together, and dipping them often, like a pen, in certain ink, compounded, as I was informed, of gunpowder and ox-gall, they make with them small punctures all along the lines of the figure which they have printed, and then, washing the part in wine, conclude the work. These punc-

tures they make with great quickness and dexterity, and with scarce any smart, seldom piercing so deep as to draw blood.—*Burder.*

NO. 312.—PRIDE OF EASTERN CONQUERORS.

li. 23. *Who have said to thy soul, bow down that we may go over.*

This is a strong and expressive description of the insolent pride of Eastern conquerors. The following is one out of many instances of it:—The Emperor Valerian being, through treachery, taken prisoner by Sapor, King of Persia, was treated by him as the basest and most abject slave. The Persian Monarch commanded the unhappy Roman to bow himself down and offer him his back, on which he sat his foot, in order to mount his chariot or his horse, whenever he had occasion.—*Lowth.*

NO. 313.—EASTERN SPRINKLING.

iii. 15. *So shall he sprinkle many nations.*

Niebuhr says, that the first time himself and companions were received with all the Eastern ceremonies, it was at the house of a Greek merchant, at Rosetto. One of the company was excessively surprised when a domestic placed himself before him, and threw water in his face, and over his clothes: but an European, acquainted with the customs of the country, explained the matter to them in few words, and kept them from being the laughing-stock of all the Easterns present.

Mr. Bruce informs us, that, in the East, being about to take his leave, they wetted him to the skin

with orange-flower water, which is the customary mode of honoring a guest throughout the East.—

Burder.

My dying Saviour and my God,
Fountain for guilt and sin,
Sprinkle me ever with thy blood,
And cleanse and keep me clean.

NO. 314.—DOVES EMPLOYED AS POSTS.

Ix. 8. *Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?*

M. Savery, speaking of a victory, says, “on the morning of that memorable day, a pigeon was sent off from Mansoura, to carry to Grand Cairo the news of the death of Faer Eddin, and of the flight of the Egyptians.” It is possible, that this practice of using these swift birds, for purposes of the utmost dispatch, may be alluded to by Isaiah ; who, when describing the eagerness with which the flocks of Gentiles should crowd into the church of Christ, says, *they shall fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows,*

When pigeons were employed as posts, they placed the paper containing the news under the wing, to prevent its being destroyed by wet; and bathed their feet in vinegar, to keep them cool, that they might not settle to drink or wash themselves, which would have destroyed the paper.—*Dr. Russell.*

De Tott informs us, that the Turkish government allows a certain sum per cent. in favor of turtle-doves; and adds, “a cloud of these birds constantly alight on the vessels which cross the port of Constantinople, and carry their commodity uncovered either to the magazines or the mills. The boatmen never oppose their greediness. This permission to feast on the

grain brings them in great numbers, and familiarizes them to such a degree, that I have seen them standing on the shoulders of the rowers, watching for a vacant place where they might fill their crops in their turn,

Burder.

NO. 315.—VISITING GRAVES TO RECEIVE DREAMS.

lxv. 4. *Who remain among the graves.*

The old Hebrews had an idolatrous custom among them of going among the tombs to receive dreams; by which they judged of events, and how to manage their affairs. They are charged by the Prophet Isaiah with *remaining among the graves, and lodging in the monuments;* which is rendered by the LXX. *sleeping in the tombs.* It is reasonable to believe, that the sepulchre of Moses was concealed, lest future generations should make a god of him, because of the fame of his miracles. Some of the Israelites erred on account of the brazen serpent which he had made, and which was broken in pieces by Hezekiah; *for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it.*—2 Kings xviii. 4.—*Lewis.*

NO. 316.—GROVES USED FOR TEMPLES,

lxvi. 17. *They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens, behind one tree in the midst.*

Abbe Banier informs us, that sacred groves in general, and the centres of those groves in particular, were made use of for temples, by the most ancient Heathens. Some tree in the centre of the grove was generally held in more eminent veneration than the rest, and was doubtless intended to be the symbol of

the tree of life, and of the knowledge of good and evil, in the midst of the garden of Eden. To this strange abuse the prophetic censure appears to allude. They *sanctified and purified themselves* with the waters of the sacred fountains and rivers in their *gardens or groves, behind one tree in the midst*.—When they built their temples, they called them groves, as they did all their places of sacred worship. Their altars were commonly raised in the middle of a court with one of the trees consecrated to the idol of the place planted near it, overshadowing both it and the idol.—*Holloway.*

JEREMIAH.

NO. 317.—THE EASTERN SEETHING-POT.

i. 13. *I see a seething-pot, and the face thereof is toward the north.*

THE Eastern pots for boiling are not placed over an open fire, as with us, but over a hole, with an aperture into it on one side, so as pretty much to resemble our coppers; which, according to Rauwolf, is done to save fuel. The opening into the small hollow underneath, into which the fuel is put under the seething-pot, appears to be what is called its *face*. Our translation supposes, that the face of this pot was turned northward, intimating that the fuel to be put under it was to be brought from the north.

As the people that were to destroy the Jews of that age were to come from the north—ver. 15; and as that destruction is represented by the consuming of meat boiled in a pot—Ezek. xxiv. 3. 14; the representing that circumstance of the destruction of Jeru-

salem was naturally expressed by exhibiting the opening into the furnace as turned northward.—

Harmer.

NO. 318.—STATE OF THE DESART THROUGH WHICH THE
ISRAELITES TRAVELED.

ii. 6. *That led us through the wilderness, through a land of desarts and of pits, through a land of drought and of the shadow of death, through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt.*

A land of desarts and of pits. Irwin speaks of his travelling in this desart, and meeting with pits, or chasms, some hundred fathoms deep; and adds, we may well cry out with the poet, “chaos is come again;” and then proceeds to say, “Omnipotent Father, in thee we trust for our deliverance from the perils which surround us: it was through this wilderness thou didst lead thy chosen people; it was here thou didst manifest thy signal protection in snatching them from the jaws of destruction, which opened upon every side.”

A land of drought. Irwin travelled seventy-nine miles in the western part of this desart before he met with any spring, and again one hundred and seventy-four miles before he met with another. He says, it was a sight bewitching to their eyes, which had of late been strangers to bubbling founts and limpid streams. In the space of three hundred and fifteen miles, they found but four springs of water.

The land of the shadow of death. This might be an allusion to its sterility, or exposure to the hostile tribes of Arabs; the overshadowing clouds of dust, which have proved destructive to thousands; or its

being the habitation of venomous serpents, and ravenous beasts.—Deut. viii. 15.

A land that no man passed through. Irwin says, that the desert of Thebais is unknown to the inhabitants of the country ; and only two or three companies have travelled in it for the space of one hundred years. A great part of the wilderness through which Israel passed was probably as little frequented in the days of Moses. *Where no man dwelt.* Irwin travelled in this desert from Ghinnah to the towns on the Nile, three hundred miles, without meeting with a single town, village, or house. It was a land *where no man dwelt.*—*Harmer.*

Is this, dear Lord, that thorny road
Which leads us to the mount of God?
Are these the toils thy people know,
While in the wilderness below ?

BRACKENBURY.

NO. 319.—ARABS LIE IN WAIT FOR ROBBERY.

iii. 2. *In the ways hast thou sat for them, as the Arabian in the wilderness.*

Chardin has given a very strong and lively description of the eagerness with which the Arabians look out for prey.—“The Arabs wait for caravans with the most violent avidity, looking about them on all sides, raising themselves up on their horses, running here and there to see if they can perceive any smoke, or dust, or tracks on the ground, or any other marks of people passing along.”—*Burder.*

NO. 320.—THE PAINTING OF EASTERN FEMALES.

iv. 30. *Thou rendest thy face with painting.*
It is a custom which has obtained from time imme-

morial among the Eastern women, of tinging the eyes with a powder, which, at a distance or by candle-light, adds very much to the blackness of them. The ancients call the mineral substance with which this is done, stibium; that is, antimony: but Dr. Shaw tells us, it is a rich lead ore, not much unlike the black-lead of which pencils are made.

Pietro Della Valle, giving a description of his wife, an Assyrian lady, born in Mesopotamia, says, her eye-lashes, which are long, and, according to the custom of the East, dressed with stibium, give a dark and, at the same time, a majestic shade to the eyes. Sandys, speaking of the Turkish women, says, that great eyes are held in repute; and the blacker they are, the more amiable they are considered. They put between the eye-lids and the eye a black powder, with a fine long pencil, which sets forth the whiteness of the eye; and though it is troublesome for a time, yet it comforteth the sight, and repelleth ill humours.

Dr. Shaw says, "none of these ladies take themselves to be completely dressed, till they have tinged the hair and edges of their eye-lids with the powder of lead-ore. The sooty color which is in this manner communicated to the eyes, is thought to add a wonderful gracefulness to persons of all complexions. This practice is doubtless of great antiquity; for we find that when Jezebel is said to have *painted her face*,* the original words are, *she adjusted her eyes with the powder of lead-ore.*"

Together lie her prayer book and her paint,
At once to improve the sinner and the saint,

NO. 321.—FIRE USED AS A SIGN.

vi. 1. *Set up a sign of fire in Beth-haccarem.*

In this place there might possibly be a very high tower. Kimchi observes, that the word signifies a high tower, for the keepers of the vineyards to watch in. If it were so, it was a very proper place in which to set up the *sign of fire*, to give notice to all the surrounding country.

It was usual with the Persians, Grecians, and Romans, to signify, in the night, by signs of fire and by burning torches, either the approach of an enemy, or succour from friends. The former was done by shaking and moving the torches; the latter by holding them still.

Burder.

NO. 322.—SINGING IN FUNERAL PROCESSIONS.

ix. 17, 18. *Call for the mourning women, that they may come, and send for cunning women, that they may come: and let them make haste, and take up a wailing for us.*

It appears, that in the East there are professional weepers of both sexes, who sing doleful tunes around the dead. Dr. Russell says, that among the Mahomedans it is common for a number of Sheikhs to walk before the corpse, with their tattered banners; next come the male friends; then the corpse, which is carried, with the head foremost, upon men's shoulders: the nearest male relations immediately follow; and the women close the procession with dreadful shrieks, while the men all the way are singing prayers out of the Koran.

Dean Addison says, that among the Jews in Barbary, it is common for the corpse to be borne by four

to the place of burial: in this procession the Chachams, or Priests, march in the first rank; next to them the kindred of the deceased; and afterward such as are invited to the funeral: these all unite in singing the 49th Psalm; and if it last not 'till they come to the grave, they begin it again. These hymns were probably sung only by the male part of the company, whilst the female relations, with their hired companions, the *singing-women*, made use of very violent lamentations.

In Egypt it is common for the relations and female friends to surround the corpse, with the most bitter cries, scratching, and beating their faces with the greatest violence. The lower class of people employ women, who play on tabors, and whose business it is to sing mournful airs to the sound of this instrument. Those women attend the corpse to the grave, intermixed with the female relations and friends of the deceased, who commonly have their hair in the utmost disorder, their heads covered with dust, their faces daubed with indigo or rubbed with mud, and howling like mad people.—*Maillet*.

Shaw says, that in the Moorish funerals there are several hired women, who, like the mourning women of old are skilful in lamentation.—*Amos v. 16.* They cry *loo, loo, loo*, in a deep and hollow tone, accompanied with sighs, and perform their part with such sounds, gestures, and commotions, that they rarely fail to work up the assembly into some extraordinary pitch of thoughtfulness and sorrow.—*Harmer.*

Let sickness blast, let death devour,
If heav'n must recompence our pains,
Perish the grass, and fade the flow'r,
If firm the word of God remains.

NO. 323.—METHOD OF LEARNING TO WRITE.

xvii. 13. *They that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the Lord.*

Dr. Shaw says, that the children of Barbary that are sent to school make no use of paper, but write on a smooth thin board, slightly daubed over with whiting, which may be wiped off or renewed at pleasure.

Dr. Pococke represents the Coptis, who are used by the great men of Egypt for keeping their accounts, as making use of a sort of paste-board for that purpose, from which the writing is wiped off from time to time, with a wet sponge ; the pieces of paste-board being used as slates.

Peter della Valle observed a method of writing short-lived memorandums in India, which he thus describes :—“ I beheld children writing their lessons with their fingers on the ground ; the pavement being for that purpose strewed all over with very fine sand. When the pavement was full, they put the writing out ; and, if need were, strewed new sand from a little heap they had before them, wherewith to write farther.” The Prophet Jeremiah appears to have had a similar method of writing in view, when he says of them that depart from God, *they shall be written in the earth* ; and certainly it means, that their memory shall soon be blotted out and forgotten.—

Harmer.

NO. 324.—TIME AND MANNER OF GRINDING CORN.

xxv. 10. *I will take from them the sound of the mill-stones, and the light of the candle.*

Shaw says, that most Eastern families have two portable grind-stones, and the uppermost is turned round by a handle of wood or iron placed in the edge

of it : when this stone is large, or expedition requires it, then a second person is called in to assist, and the women sit down over against each other, with the *mill-stone* between them.—Matt. xxiv. 41.

According to Tournefat, those mills consist of two flat round stones, about two feet diameter. The corn falls down on the undermost stone, through a hole which is in the middle of the uppermost, which by its circular motion spreads it on the undermost, where it is reduced to flour, which works out at the rim of the mill-stones, and lights on a board set on purpose to receive it.

It is common for the Easterns to bake their bread every day, and usual for them to grind their corn as they want it, in their hand-mills.* Chardin says, that this “is done in the early part of the day, and generally by the female slaves, who sing at their employment. When one goes out in a morning, he hears every where the noise of the *mill-stone*; that is to say, the voice and song of those that grind.”

Mr. Park observed this custom in the interior of Afriqa, when he was invited into a hut, in order to shelter him from the inclemency of a very rainy night. While thus employed, one of the females sung a song, and the rest joined in a sort of chorus.

As the lighting of *candles* begins the evening, there is an agreeable contrast observable in the words of the Prophet, which is as if he had said, gloomy shall be the silence of the morning; melancholy the shadow of the evening: no cheerful voice shall animate the one; no enlivening ray soften the gloom of the other: desolation shall every where reign.—

Harmer.

* The Easterns had mills worked by water, by oxen, &c.—*Chardin.*

NO. 325.—STUPIFYING POTIONS GIVEN TO MALEFACTORS.

xxv. 16. *They shall drink, and be moved, and be mad.*

This is an allusion to those intoxicating draughts which used to be given to malefactors just before their execution, to take away their senses. The Talmud says, that immediately before the execution began, they gave the condemned a quantity of frankincense in a cup of wine, to stupify him and render him insensible of his pain. The compassionate ladies of Jerusalem generally provided this draught at their own cost. The foundation of this custom was the command of Solomon.—*Give strong drink to him that is ready to perish, and wine to those that be of heavy hearts.*—Prov. xxxi. 6.—Lewis.

NO. 326.—SMITING UPON THE THIGH, A TOKEN OF SORROW.

xxxi. 19. *After that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh.*

In deep mourning it appears to have been one method by which the Jews expressed their sorrow, to smite upon the *thigh*. This is mentioned as an accompanying circumstance of the repentance of Ephraim. In this manner also was Ezekiel commanded to act, to express that sorrow which should be produced by the divine threatenings against Israel.—Ezek. xxi. 12. This practice was adopted and retained by the Greeks. Homer describes his heroes as using this circumstance of grief. So in Xenophon the brave Cyrus smites his thigh upon receiving the news of the death of his generous friend Abradatas.—

Burder.

NO. 327.—METHOD OF PRESERVING THEIR WRITINGS.

xxxiii. 14. *Take these evidences, this evidence of the purchase, both which is sealed, and this evidence which is open, and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days.*

Since both the writings were in the hands of Jeremiah, and at his disposal, it appears difficult to say for what the duplicate was made. Sir J. Chardin says, “after a contract is made, it is kept by the party himself—not the notary; and they cause a copy to be made, signed by the notary alone, which is shewn upon all proper occasions, and never exhibit the other.” According to this account, the two books were the same; the one sealed, so as to be valid, and probably sealed up, not to be used on common occasions; the other open, and to be used at pleasure. But possibly the open book was a prophecy revealing the future return of Israel which was ordered to be buried with the purchase deed. Whatever materials the Jews wrote upon, they were liable to be destroyed by dampness when hidden in the earth; it was therefore requisite to inclose those writings, to keep them from decay.

The ancient Egyptians made use of earthen urns or pots for receiving what they wanted to inter in the earth, and which, without such care, would have been soon destroyed. If they buried in earthen pots the things they wanted to preserve in Egypt, whose subterraneous caverns were so dry, and covered with several feet of burning sand, the Prophet Jeremiah might well suppose it proper to inclose those writings in an *earthen vessel*, which were to be buried in Judea,

in some place where they might be found without difficulty on their return from captivity.—*Harmer.*

NO. 328.—MANNER OF COVENANTING BY SACRIFICE.

xxxiv. 18. *They cut the calf in twain; and passed between the parts thereof.*

From the account which is given us of Abraham—Gen. xv. 10. it appears that this is a very ancient rite. It was customary to cut the victim offered upon the occasion into two parts, and so, placing each half upon two different altars, to cause those who contracted the covenant to pass between both. This rite was practised both by believers and heathens at their solemn leagues. At first it was doubtless with a view to the great sacrifice, who was to purge our sins in his own blood ; and the offering of these sacrifices, and the passing between the parts of the divided victim, was symbolically staking their hopes of purification and salvation in their performance of the conditions on which it was offered ; or intimating, at least, that so should they be cut asunder who broke the covenant.

Pitts, speaking of the Algerine corsairs, says, that if they happen to be chased at sea, or to be in a storm, they will gather money, light up candles in remembrance of some marrabot, calling upon him with heavy sighs and groans. If they find no succour from these rites and superstitions, then they sacrifice a sheep or two, after the following manner :—having cut off the head with a knife, they immediately take out the entrails, and throw them and the head overboard ; then they cut the body in two parts by the middle, and throw one part over the right side of the

ship, and the other over the left, into the sea, as a kind of propitiation ; and the ship passes between the parts thus thrown on each side of it.—*Burder.*

The cov'nant we this moment make,
Be ever kept in mind :
We will no more our God forsake,
Nor cast his words behind.

NO. 329.—AN ACCOUNT OF EASTERN PRISONS.

xxxvii. 15. *The Princes were wroth with Jeremiah, and smote him, and put him in prison, in the house of Jonathan the scribe.*

Chardin tells us, that the Eastern prisons are not public buildings erected for that purpose ; but a part of the house in which their criminal Judges dwell. The Governor and Provost of a town, or the Captain of the watch, imprisoned such as were accused in their own houses. They set apart a canton of it for that purpose when they are put into these offices, and take one of their domestics for the Jailer.

The making *the house of Jonathan* the prison would, in the East, mark out the placing him in an office of importance. It is probable that it was so anciently, and that his house became a prison when Jonathan was made the royal *Scribe*, and became like the chamber of Elishama, one of the prisons of the people.

Chardin says, that a discretionary power is given to the keeper, to treat his prisoner just as he pleases ; and all that is required is to produce them when called for. He gives us an account of the treatment which a great Armenian merchant met with. “At first, upon the Jailer’s receiving a considerable present from him, he was caressed ; but upon the oppo-

site party's presenting something considerable to the Judge and to the Jailer, the prisoner was closely confined, and treated with the greatest inhumanity, and at length thrown into a dungeon, where, in a short time, he was brought to the point to which this severe usage was intended to force him." This appears to give energy to those passages of scripture which speak of the *sighing of the prisoners*, and its coming before God!* Jeremiah supplicated, that he might not be remanded to the dungeon, lest he should die there.—Jer. xxxvii. 16, 20.—*Harmer.*

NO. 330.—BLACK EUNUCHS NOT COMMON IN THE LEVANT:
xxxviii. 7. *Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, one of the King's eunuchs who was in the King's House.*

The possession of black eunuchs is not very common in the Levant; they are hardly any where to be found, except in the palaces of the Sovereign, or of the branches of the royal family. When the Baron De Tott's wife and mother-in-law were permitted to visit Asma Sultana, daughter of the Emperor Achmet, and sister of the then reigning Prince, he tells us, that "at the opening of the third gate of her palace, several black eunuchs presented themselves, who, having each a white staff in his hand, preceded the visitors, leading them to a spacious apartment, called the chamber of strangers." He adds, that to have such attendants is a piece of great state, as the richest people have not more than one or two of them.—

Harmer.

Fleecy locks and black complexion
Cannot forfeit nature's claim;
Skins may differ, but affection
Dwells in white and black the same.

COWPER.

* Psalm lxxix. 11.

NO. 331.—EASTERN REPOSITORIES FOR CORN.

xli. 8. *Ten men were found among them that said unto Ishmael, slay us not; for we have treasures in the field, of wheat, and of barley, and of oil, and of honey.*

Dr. Shaw informs us, that in Barbary, when the grain is winnowed, they lodge it in mattamores, or subterraneous repositories, two or three hundred of which are sometimes together, the smallest holding four hundred bushels. These are very common in other parts of the East; and, according to Dr. Russell, are very numerous about the villages near Aleppo. Those repositories, when empty, are left open, which makes travelling in the night very dangerous. Le Bruyn informs us, that this is the way of keeping corn in the Holy Land. He says, they have deep pits at Rama, which he understood was designed for corn. Rauwolff speaks of three large vaults at Joppa used for laying up grain when he was there; and it was probably in repositories of this description, that the men who conversed with Ishmael had laid up their treasure.

The author of the history of the Piratical States of Barbary says, that it is usual with the Arabs, when they expect the armies of Algiers, to secure the corn and other effects, which are not portable, in subterraneous repositories, wandering about with the flocks 'till the troops are returned to their quarters.

Pitts tells us that they put straw at the bottom and sides of these places; but notwithstanding this, in consequence of the damp, the corn is much injured. But the danger of being robbed by the roving troops that scoured the country, and the evil to which the corn of

those countries is subject from the worms, if kept in the open air, may be thought a sufficient balance against the injury it received by being buried.—*Harmer.*

NO. 332.—ANCIENT DRINK-OFFERINGS.

xlii. 17. *To pour out drink-offerings.*

When the ancient idolaters made their libations, they usually filled the cup entirely full, and crowned it with flowers. Servius, on the first book of the Eneid, says, that the ancients crowned their cups with flowers, and then made libations. Thus Virgil, speaking of Anchises, says, that he adorned the great cup with a crown of flowers, and filled it with wine.

Yes ; in the flowers which wreath the sparkling bowl,
Fell adders hiss, and pois'nous serpents roll.

HERVEY.

NO. 333.—WILD BEASTS HARBOUR NEAR JORDAN.

xlii. 19. *He shall come up like a lion from the swelling
of Jordan.*

The comparison used by the Prophet in these words will be perfectly understood by the account which Mr. Maundrell gives of the river *Jordan*. He says, after having descended the outermost bank of *Jordan*, you go about a furlong upon a level strand, before you come to the immediate bank of the river. This second bank is so beset with bushes and trees, such as tamarisks, willows, oleanders, &c. that you can see no water 'till you have made your way through them. In this thicket, anciently (and the same is reported of it at this day), several sorts of wild beasts were wont to harbour themselves; whose being washed out of the covert, by the overflowings of the river, gave

occasion to that allusion, *he shall come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan.* Correspondent with this account, Ammianus Marcellinus tells us, that *lions* without number range through the reeds and shrubs of the rivers of Mesopotamia.

Jordan does not, like the Nile, overflow annually ; but like the Euphrates, in some particular years only. Dr. Pococke represents Jordan as almost hid by shady trees between the lake Samochonites and the sea of Tiberius. Sandys says, it is shaded with poplars, alders, tamarisks, and reeds of sundry kinds.

Burder.

The Prophet appears to have an eye to the rage of the Edomites.—He shall come with all the fierceness and fury of a lion forced out of his covert by the *swelling of Jordan.*

NO. 334.—THE FOUNDATIONS OF BABYLON.

I. 15. *Her foundations are fallen, her walls are thrown down.*

Though this could not be the case with foundations in general, yet it might be with those of Babylon ; for Herodotus, who had himself been there, informs us, that it was surrounded first by a deep and wide ditch, full of water, and then by its stupendous walls, fifty royal cubits broad, and two hundred high ; that the earth thrown out of the ditch was made into bricks, with which they first lined both sides of the ditch, and then built the wall in the same manner. Supposing then that the scarp, or inner wall of the ditch, served for a foundation to the wall of the city, it is very easy to conceive how such foundations, being built in a marshy soil, and continually exposed

to the undermining power of the water in the ditch, and pressed by such a prodigious weight, might give way and fall.—*Parkhurst.*

NO. 335.—BABYLON, WHY CALLED SHESHACH.

li. 41. *How is Sheshach taken!*

It is conceived, that Babylon is called *Sheshach* from one of her idols, and that the term is used by way of opprobrium. The idol Shach was worshipped there, and had a festival kept for five days together. It is said, that during this festival Cyrus took Babylon. Atheneus speaks of this feast, saying, “Berosus, in the first book of the Babylonish history, relates, that on the sixteenth of the calends of September, the feast Saicea was celebrated at Babylon for five days; during which time it was customary for masters to obey their servants; one of them, being master of the house, was clothed in a royal garment, and called Zoganez.”—*Burder.*

LAMENTATIONS.

NO. 336.—A FOOTSTOOL AN APPENDAGE TO A THRONE.

ii. 1. *And remembered not his footstool in the day of his anger.*

THE *footstool* was not only a great convenience as an appendage to the throne, but was a peculiar mark of regal honour. On this account the earth is called the footstool of the throne of God. In this manner it is mentioned by Homer:—

A splendid footstool, and a throne, that shine
With gold unfading, Somnus, shall be thine.

Burder.

By the footstool we are probably to understand, the temple.* God had suffered the Chaldeans to burn the temple with fire—Jer. lii. 13. and had obscured all the beauty and glory of the church and state of the Jews.—*Poole.*

NO. 337.—EASTERN PORTABLE OVENS.

v. 10. *Our skin was black like an oven, because of the terrible famine.*

Portable ovens were frequently used in the East, and were part of the furniture of Eastern travellers. These ovens appear to have been formed of different materials, according to the rank of the several owners. Those alluded to by the Prophet Jeremiah, when describing the distresses of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, seem to be of an inferior kind, belonging to the ordinary class of travellers: there were others of a far superior nature, made of very valuable metals. We are informed, from an Arabian tale translated in 1786, that part of the food of the Caliph Vattiek, on his travels, was delicate cakes, which had been baked in silver ovens. St. Jerome describes an Eastern oven as a round vessel of brass, blackened on the outside by the surrounding fire which heats it within.

Thevenot says, that in Persia they bake a whole sheep in their ovens which have the mouth in the top; and when the fuel by which it is heated is pretty much burnt out, and sunk at the bottom of the vessel, it is covered by an earthen dripping-pan, and the meat is hung up in the oven, where it roasts alike on all sides.—*Burder.*

* 1 Chron. xxviii. 2.

NO. 338.—BEATING THE ARMS, AN EXPRESSION OF GRIEF.

iv. 7. *Thou shalt set thy face toward the siege of Jerusalem, and thine arm shall be uncovered.*

AMONG other rites of mourning made use of by the Jews in the time of St. Jerome, was the beating of their *arms* with such vehemence as to render them black and blue. Hence it is natural to suppose, that Ezekiel's *uncovering* his arm, when personating the Jewish people at the siege of Jerusalem, was in order to expose his bruises of lamentation.

St. Jerome informs us, that on the anniversary of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, the Jews assembled in great numbers, bearing the marks of God's displeasure both in their persons and dress. These miserable people mourned over the ruins of their temple; and though their cheeks were covered with tears, their arms black and blue, and their hair all in disorder, the soldiers demanded money of them for the liberty of protracting their lamentations a little longer. He adds, that it was a custom continued in Judea to his time, for the mourning women to beat their arms with their hands, and, with a particular tone of voice and dishevelled hair, to excite tears in all that were present. It appears, that Ezekiel was to represent, not the state of the besieging army, but of the distressed Jews in the city, who would be forced to eat polluted bread,* and would want even a sufficiency of that. *They shall eat bread by weight, and with care, and they shall drink water by measure and with astonishment.*—Ver. 16.—*Harmer.*

* Ver. 12, 13.

NO. 339.—CAVERN-TEMPLES SACRED TO THE SUN.

viii. 7. *He brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, behold, a hole in the wall.*

Caves, and other similar subterraneous recesses, consecrated to the worship of the sun, were very generally, if not universally in request among nations where that superstition was practised. The mountains of Chusistan abound with stupendous excavations of this sort. Allusive to this kind of cavern-temple, and this species of devotion, are those words of Ezekiel. The Prophet in a vision beholds, and in the most sublime manner stigmatizes, the horrible idolatrous abominations which the Israelites had borrowed from their Asiatic neighbours of Chaldea, Egypt, and Persia. *He brought me, says the Prophet, to the door of the court : and when I looked, behold, a hole in the wall. Then said he unto me, son of man, dig now in the wall : and when I had digged in the wall, behold a door : and he said unto me, go in (that is, into this cavern-temple), and behold the wicked abominations that they do there. So I went in, and saw, and behold, every form of creeping things and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel were pourtrayed upon the wall round about.* In this subterraneous temple were seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel ; and their employment was of a nature very nearly similar to that of the Priests in Salsette. They stood every man with his censer in his hand, and a thick cloud of incense went up. *Then said he unto me, son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery ?* In Egypt, to the particular idolatry of which country, it is plain, from his mentioning every form of creeping things and abominable

beasts, the Prophet, in this place, alludes, these dark secluded recesses were called mystic cells; and in them were celebrated the secret mysteries of Isis and Osiris, represented by the quadrupeds sacred to those deities.—*Maurice.*

NO. 340.—PUTTING THE BRANCH TO THE NOSE.

viii. 17. *They have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke me to anger ; and lo, they put the branch to their nose.*

This expression undoubtedly alludes to some particular ceremony belonging to their idolatrous worship. Mr. Lowth says, the words may refer to a custom among the idolaters of dedicating a *branch* of laurel, or some other tree, to the honor of the sun, and carrying it in their hands at the time of their worship. Lewis says, that the most reasonable exposition is, that the worshipper, with a wand in his hand, would touch the idol, and then apply the stick to his nose and mouth, in token of worship and adoration.—*Burder.*

Perhaps they took some branches out of the garlands with which they had decked the idol, the altar, the victim, or themselves,* and smelled to them as a nosegay. Thus the worshippers of Bacchus waved their thyrsus,† carrying it in their hands whilst they danced, bowed their bodies, and often kissed the branches.—*Poole.*

NO. 341.—CUSTOM OF MARKING IN THE FOREHEAD.

ix. 4. *Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh, and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.*

Mr. Maurice, speaking of the religious rites of the

* Acts xiv. 13. † A stalk wreathed with ivy.

Hindoos, says, before they can enter the great pagoda, an indispensable ceremony takes place, which can only be performed by the hand of a Brahmin ; and that is, the impressing of their *foreheads* with the tiluk, or mark of different colors, as they may belong either to the sect of Veeshnu or Seeva. If the temple be that of Veeshnu, their foreheads are marked with a longitudinal line, and the color used is vermillion : if it be the temple of Seeva, they are marked with a parallel line, and the color used is turmeric, or saffron : but these two grand sects being again sub-divided into numerous classes, both the size and shape of the tiluk are varied, in proportion to their superior or inferior rank. In regard to the tiluk it was a custom of very ancient date in Asia, to mark their servants in the forehead. This custom is alluded to by Ezeziel ; and the same idea occurs also Rev. vii. 3.—*Burder.*

The men, who daily sigh and grieve,
 The Lots, that in our Sodom live,
 A diff'rence in their favour make,
 Into thy kind protection take,
 And claim the sorrowing souls for thine,
 And mark them with the crimson sign.

BRACKENBURY.

NO. 342.—THE DISPOSING OF BAGGAGE ON A JOURNEY.

xii. 3. 7. *Thou son of man, prepare the stuff for removing, and remove by day in their sight, &c.*

Chardin says, this is what they do in the caravans : they carry out their baggage in the day time, and the caravan loads in the evening. This management marks out the distance of the way they were going : going into captivity in a very far country. The going into captivity had no privacy attending it ;

hence they send their goods to a common rendezvous before hand, and start for their journey in the evening.

It appears, that Ezekiel was to do two things—to imitate the going of the people into captivity, and the hurrying flight of the King. The mournful, but composed collecting together all they had, for a transmigration, is vastly remote from the hurrying and secret management of one making a private breach in a wall, and going off precipitately, with a few of his most valuable effects on his shoulder.

I am not sure that the Prophet's covering his face was designed for concealment: it might be to express Zedekiah's distress. David had his head covered when he fled from Absalom, at a time when he intended no concealment: and when Zedekiah fled, it was not in the night, and consequently such a concealment was not wanted; not to say it would have been embarrassing to him in his flight, not to be able to see the ground. The Prophet mentions the digging through the wall, after mentioning his preparation for removing as into captivity; but it is necessary for us to suppose, that the emblematical actions are ranged just as he performed them.—*Harmer.*

NO. 343.—DIVINATION BY ARROWS.

xxi. 21. *He made his arrows bright.*

This was for the purpose of divination. Jerome on this passage says, “the manner of divining by *arrows* was thus: they wrote on several arrows the names of the cities they intended to make war against; and then putting them promiscuously all together into a quiver, they caused them to be drawn out in the manner of lots; and that city whose name was on the

arrow first drawn out was the first they assaulted." The arrows used by the idolatrous Arabs for this purpose were without heads or feathers, and were kept in the temple of some idol, in whose presence they were consulted. Seven such arrows were kept at the temple of Mecca : but generally in divination they make use of three only, on one of which was written, "My Lord hath commanded me;" on another, "The Lord hath forbidden me;" and the third was blank. If the first was drawn, they looked on it as an approbation of the enterprize in question: if the second, they made a contrary conclusion ; but if the third happened to be drawn, they mixed them, and drew over again 'till a decisive answer was given by one of the others. These divining arrows were generally consulted before any thing of moment was undertaken,—as when a man was about to marry, or about to go a journey, or the like.—*Burder.*

The King appears to have been puzzled which way he should take, whether the road which led to Rabbath, the head city of the Ammonites, or that which led to Jerusalem. At last he uses divination, and makes his arrows bright in honor of the solemnity. Perhaps Jerusalem was written on one arrow, and Rabbath on the other, and that which was first drawn out of the quiver he determined to attack first.

Henry.

NO. 344.—FUNERAL RITES OF THE JEWS IN BARBARY.

xxiv. 17. *Put on thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not thy lips, and eat not the bread of men.*

Dean Addison, in his account of the modern mourning of the Jews in Barbary, says, "the relations of the

deceased, for seven days after the interment, stir not abroad ; or if by some extraordinary occasion, they are forced to go out, it is without shoes; which is a token with them that they have lost a dear friend. They return from the grave to the house of the deceased, where one, as chief mourner, receives them, with his jaws tied up with a linen cloth, after the same manner that they bind up the dead : and by this the mourner is said to testify, that he was ready to die with his friend : and thus muffled the mourner goes for seven days; during which time the rest of his friends come twice every twenty-four hours to pray with him." This certainly explains what is meant by covering the *lips*, or the mouth, from which Ezekiel was commanded to abstain.—*Burder.*

By the *bread of men*, we are to understand, the bread of others; the bread which the neighbours, relations, and friends, were wont at this season to send to the mourners ; this Ezekiel was not to eat.—

Harmer.

NO.345.—FULFILMENT OF PROPHECY CONCERNING TYRE.

xxvi. 14. *I will make thee like the top of a rock : thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon.*

This city standing in the sea, upon a peninsula, promises at a distance something very magnificent; but when you come to it, you find no similitude of that glory, for which it was so renowned in ancient times, and which the Prophet Ezekiel describes—chap. xxvi. 27. 28. On the north side it has an old Turkish ungarrisoned castle; beside which you see nothing but a mere Babel of broken walls, pillars,

vaults, &c. there being not so much as one entire house left. Its present inhabitants are only a few wretches, harbouring themselves in vaults, and subsisting chiefly upon fishing: they appear to be preserved in this place by Divine Providence, as a visible argument how God has fulfilled his word concerning Tyre.—*Maundrell.*

Thy word, like silver sev'n times tried,
Thro' ages shall endure;
The men that in thy truth confide
Shall find thy promise sure.

WATTS.

NO. 346.—EASTERN PRINCES COMPARED TO LIONS AND CROCODILES.

xxxii. 2. *Take up a lamentation for Pharaoh, King of Egypt, and say unto him, thou art like a young lion of the nations, and thou art as a whale in the seas; and thou camest forth with thy rivers, and troubledst the waters with thy feet.*

Nothing is more common in the East, than the comparing Princes to *lions*, or better known to those that are acquainted with their writings; but the comparing *crocodiles*, if possessed of naval power, or strong by a watery situation, has hardly ever been mentioned.

D'Herbelot, however, cites an Eastern poet, who, celebrating the prowess of Gelaleddin, a valiant Persian Prince, said, “he was dreadful as a lion in the field, and not less terrible in the water than a crocodile.” The power of the ancient Kings of Egypt seems to be represented after the same manner by the prophet Ezekiel in our text, where he makes use of both the similes of the panegyrist of Gelaleddin.

It is strange that our translators should introduce the word *whale* in our text, and at the same time to talk of *feet*: nor indeed are rivers the abode of the whale; for its bulk is too great to admit of it. The term *dragon*, which is thrown into the margin, is the preferable version; which word in our language, as the Hebrew word in the original, is, I think, generic, and includes the several species of oviparous quadrupedes, if not those of the serpentine kind. A crocodile is, without doubt, the creature the Prophet means; and the comparison seems to point out the power of the Egyptian Kings of antiquity: they were formidable by land, and mighty by sea.—*Harmer.*

NO. 347.—WARRIORS BURIED WITH THEIR ARMOUR.

xxxii. 27. *They have laid their swords under their heads, but their iniquities shall be upon their bones.*

Chardin informs us, that in Mingrelia they all sleep with their *swords under their heads*, and their other arms by their sides; and they bury them in the same manner, their arms being placed in the same position. Bochart supposes, that Meshech and Tubal, of whom Ezekiel is speaking, means Mingrelia, and the country thereabouts. The burying warriors with their weapons of war seems to have been an ancient method of honoring the dead. The meaning of the Prophet is, that those cruel Scythians should not only be without the usual martial solemnities, with which the people of that country honored their dead; but that an exemplary punishment of their iniquity should rest upon their bones, which should be scattered upon the earth by the just judgment of God.

Harmer, &c.

NO. 348.—SWORDS USED IN INCANTATION.

xxxiii. 26. *Ye stand upou your sword.*

You make your strength the law of justice, according to the character given of ungodly men—Wisdom ii. 11. Spenser thinks, that the expression alludes to a custom of the Heathens, who put the blood of their sacrifices into a vessel or pit, in order to call up or consult evil spirits, and then stood with their swords drawn, to keep the demons off from doing them any harm—*Burder.*

NO. 349.—CUSTOM OF LODGING IN THE WOODS.

xxxiv. 25. *They shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods.*

The Eastern shepherds frequently lie abroad in the fields with their flocks, during the night, without a tent to shelter them. Chandler thus describes an occurrence in his first excursion from Smyrna:—“about two in the morning our whole attention was fixed by the barking of dogs, which, as we advanced, became exceedingly furious. Deceived by the light of the moon, we now fancied we could see a village, and were much mortified to find only a station of poor goatherds, without even a shed, and nothing for our horses to eat: they were lying, wrapt in their thick capots, or loose coats, by some glimmering embers among the bushes in a dale, under a spreading tree, by the fold. The tree was hung with rustic utensils: the she-goats, in a pen, sneezed, and bleated, and rustled to and fro. The shrubs by which our horses stood were leafless, and the earth bare.” This account is extremely amusing to the imagination, and is, I doubt not, a faithful representation of the state of

many of the ancient Israelitish shepherds ; but this management must have exposed them to many dangers, if their country at any time should be over-run with beasts of prey. The Prophet declares, on the part of God, that those destructive beasts should be taken away, at the time to which he refers.—*I will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land, and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods.*—Harmer.

When all the mercies of my God
My rising soul surveys ;
Why, my cold heart, art thou not lost
In wonder, love, and praise ?

DANIEL.

NO. 350.—STATELINESS OF THE BODY VENERATED.

i. 4. *Children in whom was no blemish, but well favored.*

IN all barbarous or uncivilized countries, the stateliness of the body is held in great veneration : nor do they think any capable of great services or actions, to whom Nature has not vouchsafed to give a beautiful form and aspect. It has always been the custom of the Eastern nations, to choose such for their principal officers, or to wait on Princes and great personages.—Curtius.

“The youths which are designed for the great officers of the Turkish empire, must be of admirable features and pleasing looks, well-shaped in their bodies, and without any defects of nature ; for it is conceived, that a corrupt and sordid soul can scarce inhabit a serene and ingenuous aspect ; and I have

observed, not only in the seraglio, but also in the courts of great men, their personal attendants have been of comely lusty youths, well habited, deporting themselves with singular modesty and respect in the presence of their masters; so that when a Pacha Spahi travels, he is always attended with a comely equipage, followed by flourishing youths, well-clothed and mounted, in great numbers.”—*Ricaut.*

NO. 351.—OBLATIONS TO THE EASTERN GODS.

i. 8. *Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the King's meat.*

It was the custom of most nations, before their meals, to make an oblation of some part of what they ate and drank, to their gods, as a thankful acknowledgment that every thing which they enjoyed was their gift; so that every entertainment had something in it of the nature of a sacrifice. This practice generally prevailing, made Daniel and his friends look upon the provisions coming from the King's table as no better than meats offered to idols, and, by being so offered, to be accounted unclean or polluted.—*Hos. ix. 3.—Acts xv. 20.—Burder.*

NO. 352.—HOUSES REDUCED TO DUNGHILLS.

ii. 5. *Your houses shall be made a dunghill.*

This was a common practice among the Romans. When any person was found plotting against the government, or guilty of treason, they were not only capitally punished, but their houses were pulled down, or the names of them changed. Thus the house of Caius Cassius was pulled down, for his affection of government, and for treason; and that of M. Manlius

Capitolinus, who was suspected of seizing the government, after he was thrown down from the rock, was converted into a mint.—*Burder.*

NO. 353.—OFFERING ODOURS, A CIVIL ACT.

ii. 46. *And commanded that they should offer an oblation, and sweet odours unto him.*

It is common, at the close of Eastern visits, to perfume the guests by burning frankincense, wood of aloes, and various fragrant essences, upon a silver chafing dish. As these perfumes were used for civil as well as sacred purposes, it is possible that all that Nebuchadnezzar did and commanded, in relation to Daniel, was of a civil nature, and by no means idolatrous or improper to be bestowed upon the Prophet. Had it been otherwise, a person so zealous as Daniel, who had run the risque of his life in the worship of his God, would undoubtedly, like Paul and Barnabas, have rejected them.—*Harmer.*

NO. 354.—PHYSICIANS AND ASTROLOGERS DRIVEN
FROM COURT.

v. 11. *Master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers.*

Sir J. Chardin gives us an account of a very whimsical honour paid the Persian princes after their death, such as driving their physicians and *astrologers* from court—the physicians for not having driven away death, and the astrologers for not having predicted it. This he supposes to be of great antiquity, and to have been the cause of Daniel's absence, when Belshazzar saw the hand, writing his doom upon the wall, which writing no body that was then with him could explain.

It is certain that Daniel was not personally known to Belshazzar—v. 13. But if Chardin's supposition be just, that the Persian court required his dismissal from the management of the affairs of state, it must have commenced at the death of Nebuchadnezzar, which, according to Dr. Prideaux, includes the sum of twenty-three years.

Curious etiquette! Upon this principle Daniel deserved to be reinstated in his office, because he predicted the death of Belshazzar: and indeed whatever was the ground of their procedure, Belshazzar made him the third ruler in his kingdom; and under Darius the Prophet made a distinguished figure at court.—Dan. vi. 1, 3.—*Harmer.*

NO. 355.—CUSTOM OF WEIGHING KINGS IN A BALANCE.

v. 27. *Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting.*

It appears, from Sir Thomas Roe's voyage to India, that these words will admit of a literal interpretation. He says, “the first of September, which was the late Mogul's birth-day, he, retaining an ancient yearly custom, was, in the presence of his chief grandees, *weighed in a balance*. The ceremony was performed within his house, or tent, in a fair, spacious room, into which none were admitted but by special leave. The scales in which he was thus weighed were plated with gold; and so was the beam on which they hung by great chains, made likewise of that most precious metal. The King sitting in one of them, was weighed first against silver coin, which immediately afterward was distributed among the poor; then was he weighed against gold; after that against jewels (as

they say); but I observed, being there present with my Lord Ambassador, that he was weighed against three several things, laid in silken bags on the contrary scale. When I saw him in the balance, I thought on Belshazzar, who was found too light. By his weight, of which his Physicians keep an exact account, they presume to guess of the present state of his body, of which they speak flatteringly, however they think it to be."—*Burder.*

Thou art reprobate silver, false coin ; thou art of no value.

One only hope may yet prevail ;
Christ hath a weight to turn the scale ;
Still doth the gospel publish peace,
And shew the Lord our righteousness.

BRACKENBURY.

NO. 356.—CHANGING THE DRESS, A TOKEN OF HONOR.

v. 29. *Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet.*

This was designed to honor *Daniel*; and according to the custom of the East, it was a ceremony highly expressive of dignity. To come out from the presence of a superior in a garment different from that in which the person went in, was significant of approbation and promotion. Whether it was the precise intention of this clothing, to declare Daniel's investiture with the dignity of the third ruler of the kingdom, or whether it was an honorary distinction, unconnected with his advancement, cannot be absolutely decided, because caffetans, or robes, are at this day put on people with both views.

Chardin informs us, that in Persia and the Indies they not only give a vestment, but a complete suit of

clothes, when they would do a person more honor than common, contrary to what is practised in Turkey and China. Kings constantly give them to Ambassadors, Residents, and Envoys; and send them to Princes who are their tributaries, and pay them homage. They pay great attention to the quality or merit of those to whom these vestments are given, and they are always answerable to their rank. The Kings of Persia have great wardrobes, where there are always many hundreds of habits ready, designed for presents, and sorted. The Intendant of the wardrobes sends one of them to the person the Great Master orders, and of that kind which the order directs. This difference of vestments is not observed in Turkey: there they are pretty much alike in point of richness; but they give more or fewer, according to the dignity of the persons to whom they are presented, or the degree in which they would caress them. Some Ambassadors have received twenty or thirty of them, for themselves and attendants.—*Harmer.*

NO. 357.—LAW OF THE MEDES AND PERSIANS.

vi. 8. *According to the law of the Medes and Persians
which altereth not.*

In Persia, when the King has condemned a person, it is no longer lawful to mention his name, or to intercede in his favor. Though the King were drunk or beside himself, yet the decree must be executed; otherwise he would contradict himself; and the law admits of no contradiction.—*Chardin.*

The Chaldeans magnified the will of their King, by giving him a power to make and unmake laws at his

pleasure, to slay and keep alive whom he would. The *Persians* magnified the wisdom of their King by supposing, that whatever law he solemnly ratified, it was so well made, that there could be no occasion to alter it or dispense with it; as if any human foresight could, in framing a law, guard against all inconviencies: but this maxim, while it honors the King's legislative power, hampers his executive power, and incapacitates him to shew that mercy which upholds the throne, and to pass acts of indemnity, which are the glories of a reign.—*Henry.*

NO. 358.—PRAYER MADE TOWARDS ESTEEMED PLACES.

vi. 10. *He went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed.*

It was enjoined upon the Jews, that if any of them were led away captive, they should *pray* to God *toward the city which he had chosen*, and the *house* which Solomon had built—1 Kings viii. 48. The conduct of Daniel, in the instance now referred to, was in obedience to that command. A similar custom of expressing an affection for any highly esteemed place, by turning the face towards it, prevails at this present time among the people in Africa. Park says, “when we departed from Kamalia, near the Niger, a town in Manding, we were followed for about half a mile by most of the inhabitants of the town, some of them crying, and others shaking hands with their relations, who were now about to leave them; and when we had gained a piece of rising ground, from which we had a view of Kamalia, all the people belonging to the coffle (a number of slaves who were going down the

coast) were ordered to sit down in another place, with their faces towards Kamalia; when a schoolmaster that accompanied them pronounced a long and solemn prayer."—*Burder.*

We must not omit duty for fear of suffering; no, nor so much as seem to come short of it. In trying times, great stress is laid upon our confessing Christ before men; and we must take heed, lest, under pretence of discretion, we be found guilty of cowardice in the cause of God. If we do not think that this example of Daniel obliges us to do likewise, yet I am sure that it forbids us to censure those who do; for God owned him in it. By his constancy to his duty it appears, that he had never been used to admit any excuse for the omission of it; for if ever any excuse would have served to put it by, it might have served in the present instance.—*Henry.*

Thus Lord, throughout my life would I
At stated times thy grace implore,
At morning, noon, and night draw nigh
Thy throne, to worship and adore.

BRACKENBURY.

NO. 359.—DIFFERENT MODES OF SUPPLICATION.

vi. 11. *These men assembled, and found Daniel praying, and making supplication before his God.*

There are various ways of making *supplication* peculiar to different nations. Themistocles, when pursued by the Athenians and Lacedemonians, and forced to cast himself on the protection of Admetus, King of the Molossians, held the young Prince, who was then a child, in his arms, and in that posture prostrated himself before the King's household gods;

this being the most sacred manner of supplication amongst that people.—*Plutarch.*

The Grecians used to supplicate with green boughs in their hands, and crowns upon their heads, made chiefly of olive or of laurel.—*Burder.*

NO. 360.—AN HE-GOAT, A TYPE OF THE MACEDONIAN EMPIRE.

viii. 5. *An he-goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground : and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes.*

About two hundred years before Daniel, the Macedonians were denominated the *goats' people*. It is reported that the occasion of this title was as follows: Caranus, the first King, going with a great multitude of Greeks to seek new habitations in Macedonia, was commanded by the oracle, to take the goats for his guide to empire; and afterwards seeing a herd of goats flying from a violent storm, he followed them to Edessa, and there fixed the seat of his empire, made the goats his ensigns or standards, and called the city the *Goats' Town*, and the people the *Goats' People*.

It is well known, that in former times Macedon and the adjacent countries abounded with goats, insomuch that they were made symbols, and are to be found on many of the coins struck by different towns in those parts of Greece. Macedon itself, which is the oldest kingdom in Europe of which we have any regular history, was represented by a goat with this particularity, that it had but *one horn*.

Ammianus Marcellinus says, that the King of Persia, when at the head of his army, wore a ram's head,

made of gold and set with precious stones, instead of a diadem. The relation of these emblems to Macedonia and Persia is strongly confirmed by the vision of Daniel, recorded in this chapter, and which from these accounts receives no inconsiderable share of illustration. An ancient bronze figure of a goat, with one horn, dug up in Asia Minor, was lately inspected by the Society of Antiquaries in London. The original use of it probably was, to be affixed to the top of a military standard, in the same manner as the Roman eagle.—*Burder.*

HOSEA.

NO. 361.—CUSTOM OF CONTRACTING FOR WIVES.

iii. 2. *So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half-homer of barley.*

CHARDIN observed in the East, that, in their contracts for their temporary wives, there is always the formality of a measure of corn mentioned, over and above the sum of money which is stipulated. This will perhaps account for Hosea's purchasing a woman of this sort for *fifteen pieces of silver*, and a certain quantity of *barley*.—*Harmer.*

NO. 362.—IDOLATROUS USE OF THE TERAPHIM.

iii. 4. *The children of Israel shall abide many days without a King, and without a Prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim.*

Jurieu says, “the Eastern nations preserved in one of the remote parts of their house the relics of their

ancestors; but if they had none of these, their posterity erected empty tombs of stone, wood, or earth, and upon these they set the *teraphim*, at the two extremities. Micah having obtained a sight of some of these oracles among the Heathen, and being ignorant of the abominations they practised by them, thought they might be sanctified by dedicating them to God, though by idolaters they were designed for enquiring of the dead.”—*Burder.*

The meaning is, that in their captivity they should not only have no face of a nation upon them, but no face of a church; they should not have liberty of any public profession, or exercise of religion, according to their choice: they shall have no legal priesthood, no means of knowing God’s mind, no oracle to consult in doubtful cases; but shall be all in the dark.—*Henry.*

NO.-363.—ART OF DIVINING BY THE STAFF.

iv. 12. *My people ask counsel at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them.*

The method of divination alluded to by the Prophet in these words, is supposed to have been thus performed: the person consulting measured his *staff* by spans, or by the length of his finger, saying as he measured, “I will go,” or, “I will not go;” “I will do such a thing,” or, “I will not do it;” and as the last span fell out, so he determined. Cyril and Theophylact, however, give a different account of the matter: they say, that it was performed by erecting two sticks, after which they murmured forth a certain charm, and then, according as the sticks fell, backwards or forwards, towards the right or left, they gave advice in any affair.—*Burder.*

The stocks were probably wooden statues or idols, which were consulted by their Priests, who would make them answer in opposition to the Prophets of the Lord, and agreeably to the wishes of this infatuated people. Those who forsake the oracles of God, to contrive for the present life, are but consulting with their stocks and their staves.

NO. 364.—NUMEROUS ALTARS USED BY IDOLATERS.

viii. 11. *Ephraim hath made many altars to sin.*

The ancient idolaters were not satisfied with worshipping one deity, or with sacrificing upon a single altar, but greatly multiplied both. They embraced every opportunity of adding to the number already received and established. The Romans were remarkable for the erection of *altars* upon any sudden benefit received. Tacitus mentions one consecrated to Adoption, and another to Revenge. When they felt an earthquake, they betook themselves by public command to religious observances ; though they did not, as on other occasions, name the god to whom they dedicated such solemnities, lest, by mistaking one for another, they might oblige the people to a false worship.—*A. Gell.*

On all the earth thy spirit show'r,
The earth in righteousness renew ;
Thy kingdom come, and hell's o'erpow'r,
And to thy sceptre all subdued.

NO. 365.—THE GRAVEN AND MOLTEN IMAGE.

xi. 2. *They sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images.*

The *graven image* was not a thing wrought in metal by the tool of the workman we should now

call an engraver; nor was the molten image an image made of metal, or any other substance, melted and shaped in a mould. In fact, the graven image and the molten image are the same thing, under different names. The images of the ancient idolaters were first cut out of wood by the carpenter, as is very evident from the Prophet Isaiah. This figure of wood was overlaid with plates, either of gold or silver, or sometimes perhaps of an inferior metal; and in this finished state it was called a graven image (i. e. a carved image), in reference to the inner solid figure of wood, and a molten (i. e. an overlaid or covered) image, in reference to the outer metalline case or covering. Sometimes both epithets are applied to it at once.—*I will cut off the graven and molten image.*—Nahum i. 14. The English word *molten* conveys a notion of melting, or fusion; but the Hebrew signifies, generally, to overspread, or cover all over, in whatever manner, according to the different subject, the overspreading or covering be effected; whether by pouring forth a substance in fusion, or by spreading a cloth over or before, or by hammering on metalline plates. It is on account of this metalline case, that we find a founder employed to make a graven image—Judges xvii. 3. and that we read in Isaiah xl. 19. of a workman *that melteth a graven image.* In these two passages the words should be, *overlayeth* and *overlaid.*—Bp. Horsley.

NO. 366.—AN ACCOUNT OF EGYPTIAN OLIVES.

xii. 1. *And oil is carried into Egypt.*

Maillet says, that the olive thrives much in Egypt, and produces fruit as large as walnuts: but Bishop

Pausæc assures us, that the country about Arsinoe was the only part of Egypt that naturally produced the olive, and that it was cultivated by art in the gardens of Alexandria. Among the Easterns, the oil of olives is one great comfort of life, being much used for food. In addition to this, they consume a great quantity for illumination, especially in those months in which the Nile overflows. Mallet says, that there probably is no country in the world, in which so much oil is consumed, as in Egypt.

This great consumption of oil leads them to draw it from other vegetables as well as olives, especially from a plant called *cintia*; but as its smell is disagreeable, and its light inferior to that of olive-oil, it is consumed only by the lower classes of society. Their hemp-oil is expressed from hemp or rape-seed, of which they have annual crops. The Egyptians are said to be the inventors of lamps, before which they used torches of pine-wood.

Syria was a land of oil, and produced it in great quantities in that part which the Jews inhabited; and hence, when they would court Egyptian favor, they sent a present of oil, which, in the nature of things, was highly acceptable in Egypt.

Oil is said to be burnt in the East in honor of the dead, whom they reverence with a religious kind of homage.—*Burnet.*

The olive-tree is of a moderate height, its trunk is knotty, its bark smooth, and its leaf resembles that of the willow. Its fruit is first green, then pale, and lastly black, when it is quite ripe.

See powdered figure, and over at long,
This olive-plant, and when to full eng-

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No. 367.—CLOUDS DOWNS FALL IN THE EAST.

Mr. A. I will be at the door with bread.

Irwin, in his Voyage up the Red Sea, says, "difficult as we find it to keep ourselves cool in the day-time, it is no easy matter to defend our bodies from the damps of the night, when the wind is loaded with the heaviest dew that ever fell: we lie exposed to the whole weight of the dew, and the cloaks in which we wrap ourselves are as wet in the morning as if they had been immersed in the sea."

M. Severy says, Egypt would be uninhabitable, did not the nocturnal dews restore life to vegetables.—These dews are so copious, especially in summer, that the earth is deeply saturated with them; so that, in the morning, one would imagine that rain had fallen during the night. The Israelites inhabited a climate similar to that of Egypt; and hence the Lord promises them the *dew of Hermon* as a signal favor.

Tell says, "the dew seems to be the richest present the atmosphere gives to the earth. When putrefied in a vessel, it has a black sediment like mud; which probably occasions the dark color of the upper part of the ground. The sulphur which is found in the dew, may be the chief ingredient of the cement of the earth; sulphur being very glutinous, as mure is dissolvent. Dew has both these properties. So great is the change produced upon vegetation by the descent of the dew, that every thing which appeared dead and dying, immediately becomes lively and delightful. The Israelites, by their sins, had reduced themselves to a state of wretchedness, like that of the earth when no rain or dew has descended upon it for a long time: but God promised he would heal

their backslidings, and would again restore them to a flourishing state.—*Harmer, &c.*

Aurora sheds
On Indus' smiling banks, the rosy shower.

THOMPSON.

NO. 368.—THE FRAGRANCY OF LEBANON.

xiv. 6. *And his smell as Lebanon.*

Not only both the great and small cedars of Lebanon have a fragrant *smell*, but Maundrell found the great rupture in that mountain, which “runs at least seven hours travel directly up into it, and is on both sides exceeding steep and high, clothed with fragrant greens from top to bottom, and every where refreshed with fountains, falling down from the rocks in pleasant cascades,—the ingenious work of nature. These streams, all uniting at the bottom, make a full and rapid torrent, whose agreeable murmuring is heard all over the place, and adds no small pleasure to it.”

Burder.

Lebanon was not only famous for cedars, but also for the trees which afford the frankincense, that excellent aromatic, and for many of the sweetest flowers which perfume the air. Such shall be the spiritual fragrance of the church, both to God and man: and if such be the fragrance of the church, what must be that of its living head? O Jesus, my Saviour, how transporting is thy name! celestial joy, immortal life is in the sound.

Sweet name! in thy each syllable
A thousand bless'd Arabias dwell;
Mountains of myrrh and beds of spices,
And ten thousand paradises.

Mrs. ROWE.

NO. 369.—THE EXCELLENCE OF THE WINE OF LEBANON.

xiv. 7. *The scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.*

The wine of Lebanon is superior to all the wines of that part of the world. David Kimchi cites a Physician, who affirmed, that *the wine of Lebanon*, Hermon, and Carmel excelled all others, for smell, taste, and medical purposes. Rauwolf, speaking of his visiting Mount Libanus, says, “the Patriarch was very merry with us, and presented us with some Venice bottles of his wine, which was so pleasant, that I must confess I never in all my life drank any like it.”

Le Bruyn says, “Canobin* is preferable to all other places, on account of their having better and more delicate wines than are to be found anywhere else in the world. They are red, of a beautiful color, and so oily that they adhere to the glass.” Rauwolf says, “the wines of Mount Lebanon are of two sorts: the most common is red; and the most exquisite is the color of our Muscadine wine—they call it golden wine on account of its color.”—*Harmer.*

JOEL.

NO. 370.—TIME OF THE EARLY AND LATTER RAINS.

ii. 23. *He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain, in the first month.*

WHERE the rain falls indiscriminately through the whole year, as it does with us, there is no notion of *former and latter rains*; but nothing is more natural than this distinction, in such a country as Palestine.

* A celebrated monastery on Mount Lebanon.

Dr. Russell says, that the summer's drought at Aleppo, usually terminates in September, by heavy showers of rain, which continue sometimes for several days together, after which there is a short interval of fine weather, and then showers again succeed. Indeed all the winter is more or less marked with rain. The autumnal rain is most probably that which is called the *former rain*, it being the first that comes after a long suspension of showers. The word *month* is not in the original.

Mr. Lowth supposes, that the *former rain* came just after sowing-time, to make the seed take root, and the *latter rain* just before harvest, to fill the ears. It was principally from the latter rains that they derived their hopes of a fruitful year.—*Harmer*.

The early rain fell in the month of September, which was called the first season, by reason of tilling and sowing of the ground : the latter rain about March, which month began what was called the latter season, because of their gathering in the fruits of the earth.—*Diodati*.

NO. 371.—SLAVES SOLD AT A LOW PRICE.

iii. 3. *They have cast lots for my people, and have given a boy for a harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink.*

Not only has this been done in Asia, where examples of it are frequent, but Europe also has witnessed similar desolations. Chardin says, that the Tartars, Turks, and Cosaques, will sometimes sell their little captives equally cheap. “When the Tartars came into Poland, they carried off all that they were able.

I went thither some years after, when many of the court assured me, that the Tartars, perceiving that they would no more redeem those whom they had carried off, sold them for so small a sum as a crown. In Mingrelia they sell them for provisions and for wine."

Morgan, in his history of Algiers, gives us an account of the unfortunate expedition of the Emperor Charles the fifth against that city, which greatly resembles the passage before us. He says, that besides vast multitudes that were butchered by the Moors and the Arabs, a great number were made captives, mostly by the Turks and citizens of Algiers; and some of them, in order to turn this misfortune into a most bitter taunting and contemptuous jest, parted with their new-made slaves for an onion apiece. "Often have I heard," says he, "Turks and Africans upbraiding Europeans with this disaster, saying, scornfully, to such as have seemed to hold their heads somewhat loftily, 'What! have you forgot the time, when a Christian at Algiers was scarce worth an onion?'"

They that know the large sums that are wont to be paid, in the East, for young slaves of either sex, must be sensible, that the Prophet designs, in these words, to point out the extreme contempt in which those Heathen nations held the Jewish people.—

Harmer.

Ye slaves of sin and hell,
Your liberty receive ;
And safe in Jesus dwell,
And blest in Jesus live :
The year of Jubilee is come ;
Return, ye ransom'd sinners, home.

NO. 372.—BONES BURNT INTO LIME, FOR PLASTER.

ii. 1. *He burned the bones of the King of Edom into lime.*

THERE was war between the Edomites and the Moabites, in which the King of Moab, in distress and rage, offered his own son for a burnt-offering, to appease his deity.—2 Kings iii. 26, 27. After this, himself, or one of his successors, having the advantage against the King of Edom, either seized him alive and burnt him to ashes, or digged up the *bones* of the dead King, who had so distressed the Moabites, and burnt them to *lime*. This perhaps was used for the white-washing of the walls and ceiling of his palace, that he might please himself with the sight of that monument of his revenge.—*Henry.*

A piece of barbarity resembling this is told by Sir Paul Rycaut—that the wall of the city of Philadelphia was made of the bones of the besieged by the Prince who took it by storm.—*Burder.*

NO. 373.—SITTING IN THE CORNER, A TOKEN OF
SUPERIORITY.

iii. 12. *As the shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear; so shall the children of Israel be taken out that dwell in Samaria, in the corner of a bed, and in Damascus in a couch.*

Rauwolf says, that the goats about Jerusalem have hanging ears, almost two feet long. Russell says, they are often a foot long, and are kept chiefly for their milk, of which they yield no inconsiderable quantity.

The same author says, that the Eastern beds consist of a mattress laid on the floor, two sheets, and a quilt.

A divan cushion often serves for a pillow and a bolster. They do not keep their beds ready made ; but the mattresses &c. are rolled up, carried away, and placed in cupboards 'till they are wanted at night. But the Hebrew word here translated *bed* may be understood of a duan or divan, with which, he informs us, the Eastern rooms are all furnished. On these they sit, on these they take their repast, and on these they sleep.—1 Sam. xxviii. 23.—Amos vi. 4.—Est. vii. 8.

Sitting in the corner is a stately attitude, and expressive of superiority. Dr. Pococke tells us, that, at a visit which the English Consul made to the Pasha of Tripoli, the Pasha, having on the garments of ceremony, gave the welcome as he passed, and sat down cross-legged in the corner. In like manner he tells us, that when he was introduced to the Sheikh of Furshout, he found him sitting in the corner of his room, by a pan of coals.

Lord Whitworth informs us, that among the Russians, who lately had many Eastern customs among them, they were wont to place the picture of their guardian saint, in the corner of their rooms. These circumstances may explain the subject before us thus :—“Just as a shepherd is sometimes able to save, from the jaws of the devouring lion, no more than some small piece of the sheep that beast had carried off ; so an adversary should spoil the land of Israel, and scarcely any part of it should be recovered out of his hand, more than the city that sits among the cities of Israel, as in *the corner of a bed*, in the most honorable place ; that is, as Samaria undoubtedly did, being looked upon as the royal city.”—Harmer.

NO. 374.—EASTERN WINTER AND SUMMER-HOUSES.
iii. 15. *I will smite the winter-house with the summer-house, and the houses of ivory shall perish, and the great houses shall have an end, saith the Lord.*

Shaw's account of the country seats about Algiers, may cast light on the subject before us.—“The hills and valleys round about Algiers are all over beautified with gardens and country seats, whither the inhabitants of better fashion retire during the heats of the summer. They are little white-houses, shaded with a variety of fruit-trees and ever-greens. The gardens are well stocked with melons, fruit, and pot-herbs of all kinds; and enjoy a great command of water.”

These *summer-houses* are built in the open country, and are small, though belonging to people of fashion, and as such explain in the most ample manner the words of Amos—*I will smite the winter-house, the palaces of the great in the fortified towns, with the summer-house, the small houses of pleasure used in the summer, to which any enemy can have access; and the houses of ivory shall perish, those remarkable for their magnificence; and the great houses shall have an end, those which are distinguished by their amplitude as well as richness, built as they are in the strongest places, yet shall all perish like their country seats.*—Jer. xxxvi. 22.

Maillet says, that in Egypt their halls are large and lofty, with a dome at the top, having several open windows towards the North. These are so constructed as to render the coolness of the apartments so great, as not to be borne without being wrapped in fur.—*Harmer.*

NO. 375.—PESTILENCE SENT UPON THE ISRAELITES.
iv. 10. *I have sent among you the pestilence, after the manner of Egypt.*

Abp. Newcome says, that this means the unwholesome effluvia on the subsiding of the Nile, which causes some peculiarly malignant diseases in this country. Maillet says, that the air is bad in those parts where, when the inundations of the Nile have been very great, this river, in retiring to its channel, leaves marshy places, which infect the country round about.

You haye died of the plague, but I commissioned the disease ; I sent it, and it swept you away in such manner, that any observant eye might have seen the hand of God in it, and might have read the commission.—*Pool.*

The famine all thy fulness brings,
The plague presents thy healing wings,
And Nature's final hour.

NO. 376.—SERPENTS HIDE THEMSELVES IN WALLS.

v. 19. *As if he leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him.*

Serpents sometimes concealed themselves in the holes and chinks of the walls of Eastern houses. This is confirmed by a remarkable story related by D'Herbelot :—Amadeddulat, who reigned in Persia in the tenth century, found himself reduced to great difficulties, arising from want of attention to his treasury. Walking one day in one of the rooms of his palace, which had been before that time the residence of Jacout, his antagonist, he perceived a serpent, which put its head out of a chink of a wall : he immediately

ordered that the place should be searched and the serpent killed. In opening the wall they met with a secret place, in which they could not discover the serpent, but found a treasure which was lodged there in several coffers, in which Jacout had deposited his most precious effects.—*Harmer.*

NO. 377.—CUSTOM OF CARRYING IDOLS.

v. 26. *Ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves.*

It is thought, with great probability, that Moloch, and those other Pagan deities, which the Israelites carried with them in the desert, were borne in niches upon men's shoulders, or drawn about in covered carriages, as we know the heathens carried their idols in procession, or in public marches. The custom of carrying the images of the gods under tents, and in covered litters, came originally from the Egyptians. Herodotus speaks of a feast of Isis, wherein her statue was carried upon a chariot with four wheels, drawn by her Priests. The same author, speaking of one of their deities, says, they carried it from one temple to another, inclosed in a little chapel made of gilt wood. Clemens of Alexandria speaks of an Egyptian procession, wherein they carried two dogs of gold, a hawk, and an ibis. Macrobius says, that the Egyptian Priests carried the statue of Jupiter of Heliopolis upon their shoulders, as the gods of the Romans were carried in the pomp of the games of the circus. Philo, of Biblos, relates, that they used to carry Agrotes, a Phœnician deity, in a covered niche, upon a car drawn by beasts.

The Egyptian Priests placed Jupiter Ammon upon a little boat, from whence hung plates of silver, by the motion of which they formed a judgment of the will of the deity, and from whence they made their responses to such as consulted them.

The Gauls, as we are told by Sulpicius Severus, carried their gods abroad into the fields, covered with a white veil.—*Calmet.*

NO.378.—MANNER OF TREATING THE SYCAMORE FRUIT.

vii. 14. *A gatherer of sycamore fruit;*

Or, more properly, *a dresser of sycamore fruit.* Pococke, in speaking of the sycamore of the ancients, says, “it is a wild small fig, at the end of which there is a collection of water: the fig must be cut, and the water let out, or the fruit will not ripen. The sycamore is a large spreading tree, with a round leaf, and has this particular quality,—that short branches, without leaves, come out of the great limbs all about the wood, and these bear fruit. It was of the timber of these trees that the ancient Egyptians made their coffins for their embalmed bodies, and the wood remains sound to this day.” Hasselquist, describing the scripture sycamore, says, “it buds in the latter end of March, and the fruit ripens in the beginning of June; it is wounded or cut, by the inhabitants of Lower Egypt, at the time it buds; for without this precaution, they say, it will not bear fruit.”—*Burder.*

NO. 379.—ECLIPSES CONSIDERED AS OMINOUS.

viii. 9. *I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day.*

One of the Asiatic poets, describing a calamitous and miserable day, says, it was a time in which the

sun rose in the West. Amos threatened that God would make *the sun go down at noon*, and would *darken the earth in a clear day*. Mr. Harmer observes, that though these expressions are different, they are of the same import, and serve to illustrate one another. They both signify how extremely short this time of prosperity would be, and how unexpectedly it would terminate. Mr. Lowth thinks, that the Prophet alluded to eclipses of the sun; for he says, that Archbishop Usher hath observed in his annals, that about eleven years after the time that Amos prophesied, there were two great eclipses of the sun; and it is well known in what an ominous light the ancients regarded them.—*Burder.*

Mr. Pool says, by the sun, we may understand their King and court, which Jeroboam at his death left, like the sun at noon, in the height of their glory. This sun did, as at noon, set under the dark cloud of home-bred conspiracies, and civil wars by Shallum, Menahem, Pekah, and Hosea, 'till the midnight darkness drew on by Pul, Tiglath Pilneser, and Salmaneser. The sun means royalty and nobility; and the earth means the common sort of people; all of whom are threatened by the Lord. How terrible are the judgments of God to those who sleep in carnal security! they are to them as the sun's going down at noon,—the less they are expected, the more confounding they are; *when they shall say, peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them.*—*1 Thes. v. 3.—Pool, &c.*

NO. 380.—ARABS, PLUNDERERS OF THE HARVEST.

ix. 13. *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plough-man shall overtake the reaper, and the*

treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop down sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt.

The Arabs commit depredations of every description: they not only seize the seed and corn of the husbandman, but strip the trees of their fruit, even in its unripe state. Maillet ascribes the alteration for the worse, that is found in the wine, of a certain Egyptian province to the precipitation with which they gather their grapes. This is done to save them from the Arabs, who frequently make excursions into the country, especially in the season in which the fruits begin to ripen. This circumstance appears to explain the passage of the Prophet before us; which is as if he had said, the days shall come, when no fear of approaching enemies shall induce the *ploughman* to discontinue his employment; but he shall proceed to cultivate the ground, in pleasurable hope of enjoying all the productions of the field, until the commencement of the harvest. In those days the *grapes* shall not be gathered in a state of immaturity, for fear of the Arabs, or other destroying nations; but they shall be suffered to remain until the seed-time. Egmont and Hayman inform us, that this is common at Aleppo. The vintage lasts, they say, to the middle of November, and the sowing season begins towards the close of October. When the fruit hangs long on the trees, it makes the wine much richer, more generous, and sweet; hence the delaying the treading of the grapes to the time of sowing, causes *the mountains to drop sweet wine.**

According to Pool, the promise is, that the reaper shall have a harvest so large, that before he can

* Isaiah v. 1,

gather in the whole it shall be time to plough the ground for the next year's crop.

OBADIAH.

NO. 381.—THE ANCIENTS GREATLY INFLUENCED BY OMENS.

Ver.15. *Thy reward shall return upon thine own head.*

IT appears, that some of the ancients were much given to observe omens, and were greatly influenced by them. They endeavoured, if possible, to avoid what they conceived to be thus portended. Potter says, “the way to avert an omen, was, either to throw a stone at the King, or if it were an ominous animal, to kill it at once, so that the evil portended by it might fall upon its own head. If it were an unlucky speech, they retorted it upon the speaker with “*Let it fall upon thine own head.*” Thus when they espied any thing in a victim that seemed to portend any misfortune to themselves or their country, they used to pray that it might be turned upon the victim's head. The like expressions are sometimes made use of in holy scripture, as in Obad. 15, and several other places. Herodotus reports, that it was an Egyptian custom from which it is probable the Grecians derived theirs. They curse, says he, the head of the victim in this manner, that if any misfortune impended over themselves or the country of Egypt, it might be turned upon that head.”—*Burder.*

A remarkable instance of superstition is found in Virgil. “ He introduces Æneas catching Ascanius's words from his mouth; for the harpies of Anchises

also having foretold that the Trojans should be forced to gnaw their very tables for want of other provisions, when they landed in Italy,—happening to dine upon the grass, instead of tables or trenchers, which their present circumstances did not afford, they laid their meat upon pieces of bread, which afterwards they ate up. Æneas caught the omen.

The lucky sound no sooner reach'd their ears,
But straight they quite dismiss'd their former cares..
His good old sire, with admiration struck,
The boding sentence, when yet falling, took,
And often roll'd it in his silent breast."

NO. 382.—TORCH-BEARERS, SACRED PERSONS.

Ver. 18. *There shall not any be remaining of the house of Esau:*

They shall all be cut off by, or swallowed up among the Jews; not so much as a torch-bearer left, —one who carries the lights before an army. It was usual with the Greeks, when armies were about to engage, for a Prophet or Priest to stand before the first ensigns, bearing branches of laurels and garlands, who was called Pyrophorus, or the torch-bearer, because he held a lamp or torch; and it was accounted a most criminal thing to do him any hurt, because he performed the office of an Ambassador. The men thus employed were Priests of Mars, and sacred to him; so that those who were conquerors always spared them. Hence when a total destruction of an army, place, or people was hyperbolically expressed, it used to be said, not so much as a torch-bearer, or fire-carrier, escaped. So Philo the Jew, speaking of the destruction of Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea, says, there was not so much as a torch-bearer left to declare

the calamity to the Egyptians. And thus here, so general should be the destruction of the Edomites, that not one should be left in such an office as just described.—*Burder.*

MICAH.

NO. 383.—THE LION, A DESTRUCTIVE ANIMAL.

v. 8. *As a young lion among the flocks of sheep: who if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver.*

THAT the lion is remarkable for tearing his prey to pieces, is particularly noted both by sacred and profane writers.—Gen. xlix. 9.—Deut. xxxiii. 22. Psalm xxii. 13.—Hosea xiii. 8. Virgil says,

The famish'd lion, thus with hunger bold,
O'er-leaps the fences of the mighty fold,
And tears the peaceful flocks.

DRYDEN.

Buffon says, when the lion leaps on his prey, he gives a spring of ten or fifteen feet, falls on, seizes it with his fore paws, tears it with his claws, and afterwards devours it with his teeth.—*Burder.*

NO. 384.—AN ACCOUNT OF HUMAN SACRIFICES.

vi. 7. *Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?*

This appears to have been the practice of the inhabitants of Florida. The ceremony was always performed in the presence of one of those Princes or Caciques whom they call Paraoustis. The victim must always be a male infant. The mother of it covers her face, and weeps and groans over the stone against

which the child is to be dashed in pieces. The women who accompany her sing and dance in a circle; while another woman stands up in the middle of the ring, holding the child in her arms, and shewing it at a distance to the Paraousti, who probably is esteemed a representative of the sun, or deity to which the victim is offered; after which the sacrifice is made.

More says, that the Peruvians will sacrifice their first-born to redeem their own life, if the Priest should pronounce them mortally sick. Thus the King of Moab, when in distress, took his first-born son, that should have reigned in his stead, *and offered him for a burnt offering*—*2 Kings iii. 27.* Maillet says, “Haron, King of Norway, offered his son in sacrifice, to obtain of Odin the victory over his enemy Harald: and Aune, King of Sweden, devoted to Odin the blood of his nine sons, to prevail on that god to prolong his life.”—*Burder.*

Whoe'er to thee themselves approve,
Must take the path thy word hath show'd;
Justice pursue, and mercy love,
And humbly walk by faith with God.

NO. 385.—CUSTOM OF SHAKING CLOTHES OVER THE WATER.

vii. 19. Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

It is a custom with the Jews in Germany, on new year's day, to send their children to the Grand Rabbi, to receive his benediction; and when they sit down to table, the master of the house takes a bit of bread, and dips it in honey, saying, “May this year be sweet and fruitful;” and all the guests do the same. They seldom omit serving up a sheep's head at this enter-

tainment ; which, they say, is a mystical representation of the ram sacrificed instead of Isaac. The ancient Jews, upon the day of atonement, discharged their sins upon a he-goat, which afterwards was sent into the desert : but the modern Jews, of Germany in particular, instead of a goat, do it upon the fish. They go after dinner to the brink of a pond, and there shake their clothes over it with all their might. They derive this custom from the passage of the Prophet Micah now cited.—*Burder.*

NAHUM.

NO. 386.—METHOD OF HONORING AN ARABIAN PRINCESS.

ii. 7. *Huzzab shall be led away captive, she shall be brought up, and her maids shall lead her as with the voice of doves, tabring upon their breasts.*

WHEN D'ARVIEUX was in the camp of the Great Emir, his Princess was visited by other Arab Princesses. The last that came, whose visit alone he describes, was mounted, he says, on a camel, covered with a carpet, and decked with flowers; a dozen women marched in a row before her, holding the camel's halter with one hand; they sung the praises of their mistress, and the happiness of being in the service of such a beautiful and amiable lady. Those who went first, came in their turn to the head of the camel, and took hold of the halter, which place, as being the post of honor, they quitted to others when the Princess had gone a few paces. The Emir's wife sent her women to meet her, to whom the halter was entirely quitted, out of respect, her own women putting them-

elves behind the camel. In this order they marched to the tent, where they alighted. They then all sung together the beauty, birth, and good qualities of this Princess.

This account illustrates these words of the Prophet, wherein he speaks of the presenting of the Queen of Nineveh, or Nineveh itself under the figure of a Queen, to her conqueror. He describes her as *led by the maids, with the voice of doves*; that is, with the voice of mourning; their usual songs of joy, with which they used to lead her along, as the Arab women did their Princess, being turned into lamentations. As the Jewish timbrel, or tabret, is beaten with the fingers, and those fingers are applied to a skin stretched over a hollow hoop, the description gives great life to the words of the Prophet Nahum, who compares women's beating on their *breasts*, in deep anguish, to their playing on a tabret.—*Harmer.*

NO. 387.—BLACKNESS OF FACE.

ii. 10. *The faces of them all gather blackness.*

Ockley, in his History of the Saracens, says, “Kumieli, the son of Ziyad, was a man of fine wit. One day Hejage made him come before him, and reproached him, because, in such a garden, and before such and such persons, whom he named to him, he had made a great many imprecations against him, saying, ‘The Lord blacken his face;’ that is, fill him with shame and confusion; and wished that his neck was cut off, and his blood shed.”

Mr. Antes complains of the manner in which he was used during his residence in Egypt by Osman Bey. He says, “at that time Ibrahim and Murat

Bey were the most powerful among the Beys. Had I complained to them, and accompanied my complaint with a present of from twenty to fifty dollars, they might perhaps have gone so far as to have banished Osman Bey from Cairo; but they would probably have recalled him, especially had they found it necessary to strengthen their party against others. Had this Bey afterwards met me in the street, my head might not have been safe. Both Ibrahim and Murat Bey knew something of me; but when they heard the whole affair, they only said of Osman Bey, "God blacken his face." This explanation of the phrase perfectly agrees with the sense of the passage referred to in this article; as also with Joel ii. 6. To gather blackness signifies, in these extracts, as well as in the scriptures, to suffer extreme confusion or terror.—

Burder.

NO. 388.—LOTS CAST FOR CAPTIVES.

iii. 10. *They cast lots for her honorable men, and all her great men were bound in chains.*

Mr. Burder says, the custom of casting lots for the captives taken in war, appears to have prevailed both with the Jews and Greeks. It is mentioned by another of the Prophets, besides the one now referred to.—*Strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem.*—Obad. ver. 11. With respect to the Greeks, we have an instance in Tryphiodorus:—

Shard out by lot, the female captives stand:
The spoils divided with an equal hand:
Each to his ship conveys his rightful share,
Price of their toil, and trophies of the war.

MERRICK.

The strength and grandeur of that great city could not be its protection from military execution ; not even from that which was the most inglorious and disgraceful : *they cast lots for her honorable men, that were made prisoners of war, who should have them for their slaves.* So many had they of them, that they sported for them with dice. *All her great men, who used to be adorned on state days with chains of gold, were now bound in chains of iron ; they were pinioned or handcuffed, not only as slaves, but as condemned malefactors.* What a mortification was this to populous No, to have those who were her pride and confidence thus abused !—*Henry.*

HABAKKUK.

NO. 389.—HORSEMEN SPREADING THEMSELVES.

i. 8. *Their horsemen shall spread themselves.*

THE account which the Baron De Tott has given of the manner in which an army of modern Tartars conducted themselves, greatly illustrates this passage. “ These particulars,” says he, “ informed the Cham* and the Generals what their real position was ; and it was decided, that a third of the army, composed of volunteers, commanded by a Sultan and several Mirzas, should pass the river at midnight, divide into several columns, sub-divide successively, and thus overspread New Servia, burn the villages, corn, and fodder, and carry off the inhabitants of the country.” The rest of the army, in order to follow the plan concerted, marched till it came to the

* Prince.

beaten track made by the detachment in the snow. This we followed 'till we arrived at the place where it divided into seven branches, to the left of which we constantly kept, observing never to mingle or confuse ourselves with any of the subdivisions, which we successively found, and some of which were only small paths, traced by one or two horsemen, &c. Flocks were found frozen to death on the plain; and twenty columns of smoke, already rising in the horizon, completed the horrors of the scene, and announced the fires which had laid waste New Servia." The difficulties which have attended the explanation of these words are thus happily removed, and the propriety of the expression established.—*Harmer.*

NO. 390.—DESCRIPTION OF WRITING-TABLES.

*ii. 2. Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables,
that he may run that readeth it.*

Pliny says, that the most ancient way of writing was upon the leaves of the palm-tree. After this they had recourse to the inside of the bark of trees; which method of writing is still in use among the Chinese. Among the Greeks and Romans they used to write on *tables* of wood covered with wax. The instrument with which they used to write was called *stylus*; it was sharp pointed at one end, to write with, and flat at the other, to efface what had been written.—

Oft turn your style, if you desire to write
Things that will bear a second reading.

HORACE.

Hence the different ways of men's writing are called different *styles*. When the tables were written,

they tied them together with a string, setting their seal upon the knot, and so sent them to the party directed, who, cutting the string, opened and read them. The Romans used annually to publish their public affairs upon tables, that all might be acquainted with them. Some of their laws were recorded on tables of brass, and hung up in their market places and in their temples, that they might be seen and read of all men. Thus the Jewish Prophets used to write and expose their prophecies publicly on tables, that every one that passed by might read them. On the invention of the Egyptian papyrus, all other ways of writing were soon superseded; and after this parchment was introduced.—*Prideaux, Rollin, &c.*

NO. 391.—CUP DELIVERED TOWARDS THE RIGHT HAND.

ii. 16. *The cup of the Lord's right hand shall be turned unto thee.*

In the entertainments of the ancients, the *cup* was delivered towards the *right hand*. Express mention is made of this practice by Homer:—

From where the goblet first begins to flow,
From right to left, in order take the bowl.

This custom seems to be referred to in the words of the Prophet.—*Burder.*

That cup which had gone round among the nations to make them a desolation, an astonishment, and a hissing, which had made them stumble and fall, so that they could rise no more, shall at length be put into the hand of the King of Babylon, as was foretold. *Jer. xxv. 15. 27.—Henry.*

NO. 392.—OF THE ORIENTAL BOW-CASES.

iii. 9. *Thy bow was made quite naked.*

The Oriental bows, according to Chardin, were usually carried in a case, hung to their girdles: this case was sometimes made of cloth, but more commonly of leather. The expression in these words of the Prophet plainly supposes this management; and must, consequently, be understood of the bow when out of the case.—*Thy bow was made quite naked.* It was taken out of the case to be employed for Israel. We should say, his sword was quite unsheathed, not drawn out a little way, to frighten the enemy, and then put up again, but quite drawn out, not to be returned 'till they are all cut off.—*Harmer, &c.*

NO. 393.—DIVINE JUDGMENTS TERMED THE ARROWS OF GOD.

iii. 11. *At the light of thine arrows they went, and at the shining of thy glittering spear.*

The judgments of God in general, are termed the *arrows of God*.* It was customary among the Heathens, to represent any judgment from their gods under the notion of arrows, especially a pestilence; and one of their greatest deities (Apollo) is ever represented as bearing a bow, and quiver full of deadly arrows: so Homer where he represents him, in answer to the prayer of his Priest Chrysis, coming to smite the Greeks with the pestilence:—

Thus Chrysis pray'd: the favouring pow'r attends,
And from Olympus' lofty tops descends.
Bent was his bow, the Grecian hearts to wound;
Fierce as he moy'd, his silver shafts resound;—
The fleet in view, he twang'd his deadly bow,
And hissing fly the feather'd fates below.

* Job vi. 4. Psalm xxxvii. 2. 3. Ezek. v. 16.

On mules and dogs th' infection first began;
And last, the vengeful arrows fix'd in man.

CLARKE.

ZEPHANIAH.

NO. 394.—THE RUIN OF BABYLON AND NINEVEH.

ii. 14. *Their voice shall sing in the windows ; desolation shall be in the thresholds.*

BABYLON and Nineveh were both to be made desolate ; but the degrees of their desolation were to vary. Babylon was never to be inhabited ; no Arabian was to pitch his tent there, no shepherds make their fold' there—Isa. xiii. 20, 21 : but flocks were to lie down in Nineveh, and the voice of singing was to be heard from the windows of its ruined palaces. These are different descriptions : Eastern flocks suppose, that songs and instruments of music would be heard in Nineveh ; while no shepherd should ever appear in the ruins of Babylon. In like manner, instead of the howling of the doleful creatures of Babylon, the sweet warbling of birds might be heard in Nineveh. The imagination finds a fine contrast between the inartificial songs and music of shepherds, mingled with the wild notes of singing-birds, and the luxurious concerts of Nineveh ; as well as between the awful silence, interrupted by the howlings of doleful and savage creatures of ruined Babylon, and the melody of former times. *This is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me ; how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in !*—Ver. 15.

Harmer.

NO. 395.—CUSTOM OF PAINTING ANIMALS.

i. 8. *I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse.*

THE word here translated *red*, signifies blood-red, not any kind of bright bay, or other color usual amongst horses. But the custom of painting or dying animals for riding, whether asses or horses, explains the nature of this description. Tavernier, speaking of a city which he visited, says, “five hundred paces from the gate of the city, we met a young man of a good family; for he was attended by two servants, and rode upon an ass, the hinder part of which was painted red.” And Mungo Park informs us, that the Moorish Sovereign Ali always rode upon a milk-white horse, with its tail died red. See also Zech. vi. 2—Rev. vi. 4.—*Calmet.*

God communicates his mind to the Prophet in a vision by night, and behold one in a human shape, namely Christ Jesus, who had appeared in this form to Ezekiel and to Daniel.* The *son of man* presents himself in a posture of readiness, speed, and resolution to help his people, and to appear for them in some tokens of greatness and majesty.—Psalm xlv. 4. The color is a symbol of his coming to avenge his own just quarrel, and the unjust dealings of his, and his people’s enemies.—*Pool.*

NO. 396.—FILTHY GARMENTS WORN BY ACCUSED PERSONS.

iii. 3. *Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments.*

It was usual, especially among the Romans, when a man was charged with a capital crime; and during his

* Ezek. i. 26 and 40. Dan. vii. 13.

arraignment, to let down his hair, suffer his beard to grow long, to wear filthy, ragged garments, and appear in a very dirty and sordid habit. When the accused person was brought into court to be tried, his near relations, friends, and acquaintance appeared with dishevelled hair, clothed with garments foul and out of fashion, weeping, and deprecating punishment. The guilty person sometimes appeared before the Judges, clothed in black, and his head covered with dust.—*Burder.*

At the time Zechariah saw this vision, he saw also in what a mean, dirty, and tattered garb he was, who represented the High-Priest. It was the hieroglyphic of *Joshua*, and not *Joshua* himself. This intimates, not only that the priesthood was poor and despised, and loaded with contempt, but that there was a great deal of iniquity cleaving to the holy things.—*Pool.*

NO. 397.—THE MISTLETOE, AN OBJECT OF IDOLATROUS
WORSHIP.

iii. 8. *Behold I will bring forth my servant the branch.*

The oak was very early made an object of idolatrous worship—Isa. i. 29. In Greece we meet with the famous oracle of Jupiter at the oaks of Dodona. In Gaul and Britain we find the highest religious regard paid to this tree and its mistletoe, under the direction of the Druids. The mistletoe is an extraordinary plant, not to be cultivated in the earth, but always growing upon some other tree, as upon the oak or apple. Pliny says, that the Druids held nothing more sacred than the mistletoe, and the tree on which it is produced, provided it be the oak. They make

choice of groves of oaks; and never perform any of their sacred rites without the leaves of those trees. Whatever mistletoe grows on the oak, they think it is sent from Heaven, and is a sign that God himself hath chosen that tree. When the mistletoe is discovered, it is treated with great ceremony. They call it by a name which, in their language, signifies, "the curer of all ills:" and having prepared their feasts and sacrifices under the tree, they bring to it two white bulls, whose horns are then for the first time tied. The Priest, dressed in a white robe, ascends the tree, and, with a golden pruning-hock, cuts off the mistletoe, which is received in a white sheet: then they sacrifice the victims, praying that God would bless his own gift to those on whom he has bestowed it.

Is it possible, says Mr. Parkhurst, for a Christian to read this account without thinking of him who was *the desire of all nations*, of the man whose name was *the branch*, who came down from Heaven, was given to heal our ills, and, after being cut off, was wrapped in fine linen, and laid in the sepulchre for our sakes? The mistletoe was a sacred emblem to other nations, especially to the ancient inhabitants of Italy. The golden branch of Virgil, without which no one could return from the infernal regions, seems to be an allusion to the mistletoe.—*Burder.*

The sacred oaks
Whose awful shades among the Druids stray'd,
To cut the hallow'd mistletoe, and hold
High converse with their gods.

DAVY.

NO. 398.—THE BURDENOME STONE.

xii. 3. *In that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone.*

Jerome thinks, that a *burdensome stone* is an expression taken from an exercise well known in Judea, in which young men used to make trial of their strength, by lifting great stones as high as they could. In this exercise, when men undertook to lift a stone too heavy for their strength, they were in danger of its falling upon them, and bruising or crushing them to pieces.

Though all the people in the world should oppose the people of God, yet could they not stand under the weight of his displeasure who is provoked by such attempts; he would grind them to powder.—

Pool.

NO. 399.—BELLS HUNG ABOUT HORSES AND CAMELS.

xiv. 20. *In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, holiness unto the Lord.*

Major Rooke, speaking of the Turkish cavalry, says, “the horses were sumptuously caparisoned, being adorned with gold and silver trappings, *bells* hung round their necks, and rich housings.” Dr. A. Clarke speaks of an Eastern painting, which represents a caravan going through the valley of serpents in the island of Ceylon, in which the camels, horses, &c, have bells, not only about their necks, but on their legs also. These bells, he thinks, were used rather for the expulsion of the serpents, than for ornaments to their cattle.

Chardin, after mentioning the Arabic translation, which signifies, that which was upon the bridle of a

horse should be *holiness to the Lord*, informs us, that something like this is seen in several places of the East: in Persia, and in Turkey, the reins are of silk, of the thickness of a finger, on which are wrought the name of God, or some other inscription.

Dr. Clarke says, it is common with the Mahomedans to put the name of God upon almost every thing; upon their bows, and other military weapons, to every literary work, or even tales and romances, they affix this sentence—“In the name of the most merciful and most compassionate God.” So that no people in the world conform more literally than the Mahomedans, to these words of an inspired writer—*Whatsoever ye do, do it in the name of the Lord.*

When the Gentiles are converted to Christ, and made Priests unto God, then ordinary things shall bear the dedicating inscription of—*Holiness unto the Lord.—Pool.*

MALACHI.

NO. 400.—PRESENTS SOMETIMES REJECTED.

- i. 8. *Offer it now unto thy Governor, will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person?*

THOUGH things of small value are occasionally offered as presents, yet are they sometimes rejected, and the wished-for favor refused. Dr. Pococke says, “the Cashef of Esna made us come ashore. I waited on him immediately with some small presents; he received me civilly, but refused what I offered him as a present, saying, that in the places from whence we were come, we had given things of

greater value, and that we ought not to shew less respect to him." If a present was not somewhat proportionate to the quality of the person applied to, the circumstances of him that offered it, and the value of the favor asked, it was rejected.

Lambs and sheep were often given as presents. Thus the Cashaf, mentioned above, made Norden and his company a present of two fat sheep and a great basket of bread. The reys, or boat-men, who had carried them up the Nile, came to see them three days before, and made them a present of an excellent sheep; and a basket of Easter bread. D'Arvieux mentions lambs, among other things offered to him as presents, when he officiated as Secretary to the Great Emir of the Arabs.

If we assemble these circumstances together, how energetic is the expostulation of the Prophet ! *If ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil ? and if ye offer the lame and the sick, is it not evil ? Offer it now unto thy Governor, will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person ?—Harmer.*

NO. 401.—A WIND CALLED THE DOCTOR,

iv. 2. *Unto you that fear my name, shall the sun of righteousness arise, with healing in his wings.*

The late Mr. Robinson of Cambridge called upon a friend just as he had received a letter from his son, who was a surgeon on board a vessel, then lying off Smyrna; the son mentioned to his father that every morning about sun-rise, a fresh gale of air blew from the sea across the land, and from its wholesomeness and utility in clearing the infected air, this wind is always called the *Doctor*. "Now," says Mr. Robin

son, “it strikes me that the prophet *Malachi*, who lived in that quarter of the world, might allude to this circumstance, when he says, *the sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings*. The Psalmist mentions the *wings of the wind*, and it appears to me that this salubrious breeze which attends the rising of the sun, may be properly enough considered as the wings of the sun, which contains such healing influences, rather than the beams of the sun, as the passage has been commonly understood.—*Burder*.

Thomson, speaking of the torrid zone, remarks, that the sun

Kind before him sends
The genial breeze, to mitigate his fire,
And breathe refreshment on a fainting world.

WISDOM OF SOLOMON.

NO. 402.—WINE AND FLOWERS USED IN EASTERN ENTERTAINMENTS.

ii. 7. 8. *Let us fill ourselves with costly wine and ointment: and let no flower of the spring pass by us. Let us crown ourselves with rose-buds before they be withered.*

IT was common to unite the fragrance of flowers and sweet-scented leaves with the pleasures of wine. D'Herbelot says, “Kessai one day presented himself at the door of the apartment of Al Mammon, the son of the reigning Khaliff, to read one of his lectures. The Prince, who was then at table with his companions, wrote him a distich upon a leaf of myrtle, the sense of which was, there is a time for study, and a time for diversion: this is a time I have destined for

the enjoyment of friends, wine, roses, and myrtle." Here we see the rose and the myrtle made use of in a princely drinking bout. The Arabian Night Entertainments mention myrtle, lilies, jessamine, and other pleasant flowers, as purchased for a grand entertainment in the days of the same Khaliff, with various kinds of fruits and confectionary.

Among the vegetable ornaments worn by the Aleppine ladies on their heads, we find much earlier flowers made use of; narcissusses, violets, and hyacinths, which, Dr Russell tells us, blossom in the East very early in the spring: and are used by the women to decorate their head-dress, along with many other flowers which he mentions.—*Harmer.*

NO. 403.—HEATHEN RED IDOLS.

xiii. 13. 14. *Hath carved it diligently, when he had nothing else to do, and formed it by the skill of his understanding, and fashioned it to the image of a man; or made it like some vile beast, laying it over with vermillion, and with paint, coloring it red.*
The ancient Heathen, though they gave their idols a human form, were inclined to paint them red, in preference to the natural color of the human body. Perhaps this might originate in their being set up in memory of warriors remarkable for shedding blood. It appears, that they clothed them with purple raiment, as the dress of royalty.—*Baruch vi. 12.* and besmeared them with red paint, as the images of warriors who had often been besmeared with blood.

Niebuhr speaks of an Indian festival, in which the guests rub their clothes, their faces, and their hands, with red, in commemoration of the hero whom they celebrate. He says, they run about the streets with

syringes full of compound liquid of yellow and red, which they apply to those of their religion; and nobody pretends to wipe off these spots. From deified warriors, the color might come to be applied to idols of every kind, and to be considered as having something god-like in it. Thus, Niebuhr says, the Indians on the coast of Malabar, who daub themselves and their countrymen in a solemnity that commemorates a great victory of one of their heroes, daub their deities also with the same color. He says, that on visiting a chapel in the great pagoda, or Indian temple, he found there two figures of human shape, with an elephant's head, lately rubbed with red coloring, and heaps of rough unshapen stones, which probably represented some subaltern divinity, or some hero or saint; for such are often found at Bombay upon the high road, and under certain trees, which the Indians look upon to be sacred.

It appears, that the Heathen had sacred images of beasts, which they painted after a similar manner. Arnobius speaks of the sacred heads of lions whose consecrated busts were thus colored; but the learned are puzzled to explain what these heads were designed to represent.—*Harmer.*

ECCLESIASTICUS.

NO. 404.—ILLUMINATION OF THE NILE.

xxiv. 27. *He maketh the doctrine of knowledge appear as the light, and as Geon in the time of vintage.*

As the author of this book was an Egyptian Jew, many have supposed, that by *Geon* we are to understand the Nile. But he could not intend to com-

pare knowledge to the clearness of the stream; for the time of vintage fell out within the period of the inundation of the Nile, when its waters are mixed with large quantities of mud; but must be understood to speak of the illuminations upon it, which were wont to be so brilliant at that season. Menochius affirms, that in his time the Abyssinians called the Nile, Guyon: and Josephus supposed, that the Gihon of Paradise was the Nile.

When the Nile is risen to such a height as to secure future plenty, they open Khalis, which terminates in a large lake not far from Cairo. Upon the opening of this canal great rejoicings are made both by day and night. Thevenot says, "as soon as we came near Old Cairo, we saw on all hands, ashore and upon the water, a vast number of large figures made of lamps, placed in the order of crosses, mosques, stars, trees, &c. There were two statues of fire, representing a man and a woman. These figures were two square machines of wood, two pikes length high, each in a boat. These machines are filled with lamps from top to bottom. In each of these figures there are above 2000 lamps; which are so placed, that on all sides you see a man and a woman of fire. All the barks of the Pasha and Beys are also full of lamps; and their music of trumpets, flutes, and drums, mingled with squibs, crackers, and fire-lances, make an agreeable confusion, calculated to cheer the most dejected. This solemnity continues for three nights." The Arabian writers speak of twenty thousand boats being assembled at this period, all illuminated, for four or five leagues around the floating palaces. Water-illuminations must be the most brilliant, the water reflecting the splendor, and greatly augmenting the light.—*Harmer.*

MATTHEW.

NO. 405.—SUPPOSED SIGNIFICATION OF NEWLY DISCOVERED STARS.

“2. Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him.

ORIGEN informs us, that the Heathen thought the rise of a new star, or the appearance of a comet, portended the birth of a great person. According to Virgil, it was commonly imagined that the gods sent stars to point out the way to their favorites in difficult and perplexed cases; and the ancients called the globes of fire appearing in the air, stars.

Shuckford says, the ancients had an opinion that their great men and heroes, at their death, migrated into some star; and in consequence of that, they deified them. Thus Julius Cæsar was canonized, because of a star that appeared at his death, into which they supposed he was gone.—*Burder.*

It being generally understood that the King of the world should be born in Judea, they concluded, that this star was the sign of his birth; peradventure, by Balaam's prophecy.—Numb. xxiv. 17. But the firm persuasion of its being so, could not proceed but from an especial revelation, or the inspiration of God.—

Diodati.

Soon as the womb of time brings forth,
And the blest babe appears,
Lo! a new star through Heav'n's expanse
His wondrous motion steers.

BRACKENBURY.

NO. 406.—CAMEL'S-HAIR GARMENTS.

iii. 4. *And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair.*

The vestments of the great in the time of John the Baptist were *purple and fine linen*--Luke xvi. 19. But with regard to camel's hair, it would appear that they had not learned to manufacture it as it is now done in the East, and which renders what is made of it so valuable. Campbell says, the Baptist's raiment was not made of the fine hair of that animal, whereof an elegant kind of cloth is made, which is called camlet, but of the long and shaggy hair of camels, which in the East is manufactured into a coarse stuff, anciently worn by monks and anchorites.

As our shepherds pick up the coarse wool which is lost by the sheep, and spin it into yarn, which they knit into stockings for their own wear; so the inhabitants of the Jewish deserts made a coarse stuff of the woolly hair which nature annually threw off their camels; which dress John adopted when he lived among those poor people. Thus the Tartars of our time manufacture their *camel's hair* into a kind of felt, for the covering of their wooden habitations. The raiment of the Baptist is represented as mean, if not mortifying. *What went ye out for to see? a man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that wear soft clothing are in King's houses.*—Matthew xi. 8.—

Harmer, and Burder.

NO. 407.—ACCOUNT OF THE LOCUSTS AND WILD HONEY.

iii. 4. *His meat was locusts and wild honey.*

Dampier informs us, that the Indians of the Bashee islands eat the *locusts*; and that he himself once

tasted of this dish, and liked it very well. He also says, that the Tonquinez feed on locusts ; that they eat them fresh, broiled on coals, or pickle them to keep : they are plump and fat, and are much esteemed, both by rich and poor, as good wholesome food. Shaw says, that when they are sprinkled with salt, their taste is not unlike fresh-water cray-fish. Ives says, that the inhabitants of Madagascar eat locusts, of which they have an immense quantity ; and they prefer them to the finest fish. Russell tells us, that the Arabs salt them and eat them as a delicacy.

Wild honey is probably obtained from wild bees, which are frequent in Palestine, and found in hollow trunks or branches of trees, and the clefts of rocks. Some have supposed this to be the honey-dew, or liquid kind of manna exuding from the leaves of trees, as of the palm or fig-tree ; and Pliny speaks of honey as flowing from the olive-tree in Syria ; but surely nothing is so probable as the genuine honey. That into which Jonathan dipped the end of his rod was probably in some hollow tree, and not otherwise to be obtained.—1 Sam. xiv. 27.—*Harmer, and Burder.*

NO. 408.—SHOES CARRIED BY SERVANTS.

iii. 11. *Whose shoes I am not worthy to bear.*

The custom of loosing the sandals from off the feet of an Eastern worshipper, was ancient and indispensable. It is also commonly observed in visits to great men. The sandals or slippers are pulled off at the door ; and either left there, or given to a servant to bear. The person to bear them means an inferior domestic, or attendant upon a man of high rank, to take care of, and return them to him again.—

Asiatic Researches.

It was customary among the Romans, to lay aside their shoes when they went to a banquet. The servants took them off their masters' feet when they entered the house; and returned them when they departed to their own habitations.

This was the work of servants among the Jews; and it was reckoned so servile, that it was thought too mean for a scholar or a disciple to do. The Jews say, "all services which a servant does for his master, a disciple does for his, except unloosing his shoes." John thought it was too great an honor for him to do that for Christ, which was thought too mean for a disciple to do for a wise man.—*Gill.*

Lo, one among you stands unknown,
A greater far than I,
Who am not worthy to stoop down,
His sandals to untie.

BRACKENBURY.

NQ. 409.—CHAFF BURNT AFTER WINNOWING.

iii. 12. *He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.*

Here is an evident allusion to the custom of burning the *chaff* after winnowing, that it might not be blown back again, and so be mingled with the wheat. There was danger, lest, after they had been separated, the chaff should be blown again amongst the wheat by the changing of the wind. To prevent this they put fire to it at the windward side, which crept on, and never gave over till it had consumed all the chaff. In this sense it was an *unquenchable fire.*

Burder.

NO. 410.—WASHING, AN ACT OF CONSECRATION.

iii. 15. *Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.*

As Christ had submitted to circumcision, which was the initiatory ordinance of the Mosaic dispensation, it was necessary that he should submit to baptism, which was instituted by no less an authority, and was the introduction to his own dispensation of eternal mercy and truth: but it was necessary also, on another account, because our Lord represented the High Priest, and was to be High Priest over the house of God.

Previous both to anointing and clothing, at the consecration of the Jewish High Priest, there was another ceremony,—that of washing with water. This was common both to the High Priests and the other Priests.—Exodus xxix. 4. From hence some have explained these words of our Lord, when he desired to be baptised by John; that being about to enter upon his priestly office, it became him to be baptised, or washed, according to the law to which he was subject. Thus he fulfilled the righteous ordinance of his initiation into the office of High Priest, and thus was prepared to make an atonement for the sins of mankind.—*Jennings, &c.*

NO. 411.—CHRIST TEACHING IN THE SYNAGOGUE.

iv. 23. *And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues.*

The Scribes ordinarily taught *in the synagogues*: but it was not confined to them; as it appears that Christ did the same. It has been questioned by what right Christ and his Apostles, who had no public

character among the Jews, taught in their synagogues. In answer to this, Dr. Lightfoot observes, that though this liberty was not allowed to any illiterate person or mechanic, but to the learned only, they granted it to Prophets and workers of miracles, and such as set up for heads and leaders of new sects, in order that they might inform themselves of their dogmata, and not condemn them unheard and unknown. Under these characters Christ and his apostles were admitted to this privilege.—*Jennings.*

The Jews were all obliged to worship God in public, either in the synagogue or in the temple: hence Jerusalem is said to have contained four hundred and eighty synagogues. These were governed by a council, or assembly, over whom was a President, called in the gospel, *the Ruler of the synagogue*: these were *the chiefs of the Jews, the Governors, the Overseers, and the Fathers of the synagogue*.—*Clarke.*

NO. 412.—SITTING, THE POSTURE OF EASTERN MASTERS.

v. 1. *And when he was set, his disciples came unto him.*

Sitting was the proper posture of masters, or teachers. The form in which the master and his disciples sat is thus described by Maimonides:—"The master sits at the head, or in the chief place, and the disciples before him in a circuit, like a crown; so that they all see the master, and hear his words. The master may not sit upon a seat, and the scholars upon the ground; but either all upon the earth, or upon seats. Indeed from the beginning, or formerly, the master used to sit, and the disciples to stand; but before

the destruction of the second temple, all used to teach their disciples sitting."

Our Lord went to the mountain, that he might have the greater advantage of speaking, so as to be heard by that great concourse of people which followed him. He thought it as lawful to preach upon a mountain as in a synagogue, nor did his disciples doubt the legality of hearing him.

NO. 413.—SALT MAY LOSE ITS SAVOUR.

v. 13. *If the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?*

Maundrell says, that in the valley of salt near Gebul, about four hours journey from Aleppo, there is a small precipice, occasioned by the continual taking away of the salt. "In this," he says, "you may see how the veins of it lie. I broke a piece of it, of which the part that was exposed to the rain, sun, and air, though it had the sparks and particles of salt, yet had perfectly lost its taste; but the innermost, which had been connected to the rock, still retained its savour." This greatly illustrates our Lord's supposition.—*Burder.*

A Preacher or private Christian, who has lost the life of Christ, and the witness of his spirit out of his soul, may be likened to this salt. He may have the sparks and glittering particles of true wisdom, but without its unction or comfort. Only that which is connected with the rock, the soul which is in union with Christ Jesus by the Holy Spirit, can preserve its savour, and be instrumental of good to others.—*Clarke.*

NO. 414.—GIFT LEFT BEFORE THE ALTAR.

v. 24. *Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother; and then come and offer thy gift.*

This delay was unusual in *gifts* offered at the *altar* in such a cause. The oblation of a sacrifice, presented even at the altar, has indeed been delayed, and the sacrifice rejected: for at that time it might be discovered, that the beast had a blemish, or was on some account an improper sacrifice; or the person himself, who came to make the offering, might, through uncleanness or some other cause, be disqualifed for the present. But among all these things, we do not meet with this, concerning which Christ speaks in the passage before us; so that he seems to enjoin a new matter: and as the offended brother might perhaps be absent in the furthest parts of the land of Israel, and could not be spoken to for some time, it may appear an impossible thing which is commanded. What is to become of the beast, in the mean time, which is left at the altar? To obviate this difficulty, it is answered, that it was a custom and a law among the Jews, that the sacrifices of particular men should not immediately, as soon as they were due, be brought to the altar; but that they should be reserved to the feast next following, whatsoever that were, whether the passover, or pentecost, or the feast of tabernacles, and be then offered. At those times all the Israelites were present; and any brother, against whom one had sinned, was not far off from the altar. To this time and custom of the nation it is probable that Christ might allude.—*Lightfoot.*

The gifts were their free-will offerings. Bring unto God the best and most acceptable sacrifices that you can ; yet, if there be found malice or anger in your hearts, God will not accept them ; and if you remember that your brother hath just reason to be offended with you, leave there your gift before the altar, and do all in your power to promote a conciliation, *and then come and offer thy gift.*

NO. 415.—DIVORCING OF THE WIFE.

v. 31. *It hath been said, whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement.*

The Jewish Doctors gave great licence in the matter of divorce. Among them, a man might divorce his wife, if she displeased him, even in the dressing of his victuals !

Rabbi Akiba said, “If any man saw a woman handsomer than his own wife, he might put his wife away ; because it is said in the law, *if she find not favor in his eyes.*”—Deut. xxiv. 1. Josephus, the celebrated Jewish historian, in his life, tells us, with the utmost coolness and indifference, “about this time I put away my wife, who had borne me three children, not being pleased with her manners.”

These two cases are sufficient to shew, to what a scandalous and criminal excess this matter was carried among the Jews. However, it was allowed by the school of Shammai, that no man was to put away his wife unless for adultery ; but the school of Hillel gave much greater licence.

The following is the common form of a writing of divorcement :—

“ On the day of the week A. in the month B. in the

year C. from the beginning of the world, according to the common computation, in the province of D.; I. N. the son of N. by whatever name I am called, of the city of E. with entire consent of mind, and without any compulsion, have divorced, dismissed, and expelled thee,—thee, I say, M. the daughter of M. by whatever name thou art called, of the city E. who wast heretofore my wife; but now I have dismissed thee,—thee, I. say, M. the daughter of M. by whatsoever name thou art called, of the city E.; so as to be free, and at thine own disposal, to marry whomsoever thou pleasest, without hindrance from any one, from this day for ever. Thou art therefore free for any man. Let this be thy bill of divorce from me, a writing of separation and expulsion, according to the law of Moses and Israel.

“Reuben, son of Jacob, witness.

“Eliezar, son of Gilead, witness.”

Clarke.

NO. 416.—SWEARING BY HEAVEN AND EARTH.

v. 34. *Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his foot-stool.*

It was common to appeal both to God and man, to bear testimony to the truth of what was spoken, that if there were any flaw or insincerity, it might be detected; and if any crime, it might not go unpunished.

Clarke.

Then the great Trojan Prince unsheathe'd his sword,
And thus with lifted hands the gods ador'd:
Thou land, for which I wage this war, and thou
Great source of day, be witness to my vow!

Almighty King of Heaven and Queen of air,
 Propitious now, and reconcil'd by pray'r ;
 Ye springs, ye floods, ye various pow'rs who lie
 Beneath the deep, or tread the golden sky,
 Hear and attest.

PITT.

NO. 417.—CUSTOM OF SWEARING BY THE HEAD.

v. 36. *Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.*

It was common among the ancients to swear by the head. Thus Virgil, “I swear by this head of mine, by which my father before me was wont to swear.” Homer mentions the adjuring of another by his head:—

O thou, that dost thy happy course prepare
 With pure libations and with solemn pray'r ;
 By that dread pow'r to whom thy vows are paid,
 By all the lives of these ; thy own dear head ;
 Declare sincerely, to no foe's demand,
 Thy name, thy lineage, and paternal land.

This also was a common form of swearing among the Jews; and the wise men say, that such as vowed by the life of the head could not retract their oath.—

Burder.

NO. 418.—EASTERN COMPULSION.

v. 41. *Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.*

Our Lord in this passage refers to the Angari, or Persian messengers, who had the royal authority for pressing horses, ships, and men, to assist them in the business on which they were employed. In the modern government of Persia, there are officers, not unlike the ancient Angari, called Chappars, who serve to carry dispatches between the court and the provinces.

When a Chapper sets out, the master of the horse furnishes him with one horse only ; and when that is weary, he dismounts the first man he meets, and takes his horse. There is no pardon for a traveller that should refuse to let a Chapper have his horse, nor for any other who should deny him the best horse in his stable.—*Hanway*.

The Jews, and inhabitants of other provinces, were compelled by the Roman Governors, or the Tetrarchs, to furnish horses, and themselves to accompany their public messengers, as those on public business might compel the horses of those on the road to attend them. The Persian couriers, wore a dagger, as a mark of authority, called hanger ; from which the name of angari is supposed by some to be derived.—*Chardin*.

“ As I became familiarized to my Tartar guide, I found his character disclose much better traits than his first appearance bespoke. Perceiving that I was very low-spirited and thoughtful, he exhibited manifest tokens of compassion ; and taking it into his head that I was actually removed for ever from my friends and my family, he spoke in a style of regret and feeling which did honor to his heart, while he did every thing in his power to alleviate my feelings. The first object he seemed to have in view on our journey, was to impress me with a notion of his consequence and authority, as a messenger belonging to the Sultan. As these men are employed by the first Magistrates in the county, and are the links of communication between them, they think themselves of great importance to the state ; while the great men, in whose business they are employed, make

them feel the weight of their authority, and treat them with the greatest contempt. They are servile to their superiors, and insolent to their inferiors, or such as are in their power.

"As carriers of dispatches, their power and authority, wherever they go, are in some points undisputed ; and they can *compel* a supply of provisions, horses, and attendants, whenever it suits their occasion ; nor dare any man resist their right to take the horse from under him, be the owner's occasion ever so pressing. As soon as he stopped at a caravanserai, he immediately lifted up his voice in the name of the Sultan, and demanded, in a menacing tone, fresh horses, victuals, &c. on the instant. The terror of this great man operated like magic ; nothing could exceed the activity of the men, the briskness of the women, and the terror of the children."—*Campbell.*

The scope of our Lord's language appears to be this,—*be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*—Rom. xii. 21.

NO. 419.—EASTERN METHOD OF SALUTATION.

v. 47. *If ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others.*

Niebuhr says, that when the Arabs salute one another, it is generally in these terms:—"Peace be with you ;" in speaking which they lay the right hand on the heart. The answer is, "With you be peace." Aged people are inclined to add to these words, "and the mercy and blessing of God." The Mahomedans of Egypt never salute a Christian in this manner : they content themselves with saying, "Good day to you ;" or, "Friend, how do you do?"

The Arabs of Yemen, who seldom see any Christian, are not so zealous but that they will sometimes give them the “Peace be with you.”

The more rigid Jews would not address the usual compliment of “Peace be to you” either to Heathens or publicans ; and the publicans of the Jewish nation who used it to their countrymen, that were publicans, would not use it to the Heathens : but in the language of our Lord, he required his disciples to lay aside the moroseness of Jews, and express more extensive benevolence in their salutations. There doth not appear to be any thing of embracing in the compliment before us, though that doubtless was practised anciently amongst relations and intimate friends, as it is at present among modern Asiatics.—*Harmer.*

NO. 420.—TRUMPET BLOWN BEFORE HYPOCRITES.

vi. 2. *Do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do, &c.*

The word *hypocrites* leads us to the ancient players in the theatre, who represented persons and characters which they themselves were not. Their general manner was to put a mask over the whole head ; by which means a person whose own visage was disfigured, might wear a beautiful mask ; while he himself frowned, his mask might smile ; that might be complacent and serene, though his own temper was morose and peevish ; or that might exhibit the character of a hero or a deity, of Alexander or Jupiter, while the wearer was far enough from resembling either, in form, in manners, or in attributes.

Calmet.

From Æschylus the chorus learnt new grace:
He veil'd with decent masks the actor's face,
Taught him in buskins first to tread the stage,
And rais'd a theatre to please the age.

BOILEAU.

The Pharisees, it is possible, might carry matters to such an excess of pride and vain glory as, literally, thus to proclaim their liberality; but probably we are to understand it of the pompous and public manner in which they spoke of, and dispensed, their benevolence. Chardin relates, that in the East the dervises use rams' horns, which there are remarkably long, for trumpets, and that they blow them in honor of the donor when any thing is given them. It is not impossible but that some of the poor Jews that begged alms might be furnished like the Persian dervises, who are a sort of religious beggars; and that these hypocrites might be disposed to confine their alms-giving very much to such as they knew would pay them this honor.—*Harmer.*

NO. 421.—PRAYING IN THE STREETS.

vi. 5. *They love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corner of the streets.*

This practice was probably common with those who were fond of ostentation in their devotions, and who wished to engage the attention of others. This practice might be traced in different nations. Aaron Hill says “such Turks as at the common hours of prayer are on the road, or so employed as not to find convenience to attend the mosques, are still obliged to execute that duty; nor are they ever known to fail, whatever business they are then about; but pray immediately when the hour alarms them, in that

very place where they chance to stand, insomuch, that when a janissary, whom you have to guard you up and down the city, hears the notice which is given him from the steeples, he will turn about, stand still, and beckon with his hand, to tell his charge he must have patience for a little while, when taking out his handkerchief, he spreads it on the ground, sits cross-legged thereupon, and says his prayers, though in the open market ; which having ended, he leaps briskly up, salutes the person whom he undertook to convey, and renewes his journey, with the mild expression of “Come dear, follow me.” This practice appears to be general throughout the East.—*Burder.*

His virtues were his pride ; and that one vice
Made all his virtues gewgaws of no price ;
He wore them as fine trappings for a show,
A praying, synagogue-frequenting beau..

COWPER.

NO. 422.—VAIN REPETITIONS.

vi. 7. *When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the Heathen do.*

The Jews had very much lost the spirit of this devout exercise, and had suffered themselves, in some instances, to be influenced by Heathen practices: one of these our Lord in particular prohibits,—that of using *vain repetitions*. The practice of the Heathen may be understood from their writings. Aeschylus has near an hundred verses at a time made up of nothing but tautologies. The idolatrous worshippers of Baal called on the name of Baal from morning even unto noon, saying, *O Baal, hear us.*—1 Kings xviii. 26. Thus also the devotees of Diana all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians.*—Acts xix. 34.—*Burder.*

Suidas, in speaking of vain repetitions, says, "the original word came from one *Bathus*, a very indifferent poet, who made very prolix hymns, in which the same idea frequently occurred." The Mahomedans are peculiarly remarkable for vain repetitions in their devotions. The following is the commencement of one of their prayers:—"O God! O God! O God! O God! O Lord! O Lord! O Lord! O Lord! O Lord! O thou living! O thou immortal! O creator of the heavens and earth, &c." Such praying, or battologizing, can neither comport with the seriousness of devotion, nor with the dignity of the Divine Nature.—*Harmer.*

NO. 423.—FASTING COMMON AMONG THE JEWS.

vi. 16. When ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance.

Fasting has in all ages, and among all nations, been used in time of mourning, sorrow, or affliction. The King of Nineveh, terrified by Jonah's preaching, ordered that not only men, but beasts also should continue without eating or drinking, should be covered with sackcloth, and each after their manner should cry to the Lord.—Jonah iii. 5, 6.

The Jews, in their fasts, begin the observance of them in the evening, after sun-set; and remain without eating 'till the same hour the next day. Children, from the age of seven years, fast in proportion to their strength. During the fast, they abstain from food, bathing, perfumes, and anointing. This is the idea which the Eastern people generally have of fasting; it is a total abstinence from pleasure of every

kind. The Pharisees used to fast twice in a week; i. e. on Thursday, in memory of Moses' going up to Mount Sinai on that day; and on Monday, in memory of his coming down from thence.—*Calmet*.

NO. 424.—ROBES OF ROYALTY AMONG THE JEWS.

vi. 28, 29. *Consider the lilies of the field how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these.*

The royal robes which were put on the King of Judah at his coronation were very rich and splendid. This may certainly be gathered from the declaration of Christ in these words. This allusion is the more apposite, if, as Josephus saith, Solomon was usually clothed in white. On this supposition, it is probable that this was the color of the royal robes of his successors: but it being likewise the color of the Priests' garments, the difference between them must be supposed to lie in the richness of the stuff with which they were made.—*Jennings*.

Art must not contend with nature. The beauty and *glory* of apparel, is no more than is to be found in creatures much inferior to our order; which made Solon, though an Heathen, prefer the sight of a peacock to that of Croesus. Clothing is an article not worthy our anxious thought. God, who clothes the *lilies*, will not forget his offspring.

Intrust thy fortune to the pow'rs above,
Leave them to manage for thee, and to grant
What their unerring wisdom sees thee want:
In goodness, as in greatness, they excel;
Oh, that we lov'd ourselves but half so well!

JUVENAL.

NO. 425.—MANNER OF HEATING OVENS IN THE EAST.

vi. 30. *The grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven.*

Shaw says, that myrtle, rosemary, and other plants, are made use of in Barbary to heat their *ovens* and their *bagnios*. This appears to be a comment upon the words of our Lord; which plainly mean, that lily-stalks are used for fuel; used no doubt, in common with the dried stalks of other plants, in heating their ovens. Dr. Russell says, that herbage, when cut down, is dry in twenty-four hours.

The rose is fragrant, but it fades in time,
The violet sweet, but quickly past its prime :
White lilies hang their heads and soon decay,
And whiter snow in minutes melts away :
Such and so withering is our blooming youth.

DRYDEN.

NO. 426.—A JEWISH PROVERB.

vii. 4. *Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye.*

Lightfoot has shewn that this expression was a proverb among the Jews. The word which we render *mote*, signifies a little splinter; and thus it is opposed to a large *beam* with great propriety. But as it is impossible that such a thing as a beam of wood should be lodged in the eye, possibly these words might signify different kinds of distempers to which that tender part is subject; the former of which might be no more, in comparison of the latter, than a splinter to a beam.—Doddridge.

Some quarrel with their brother about small faults, while they allow themselves in greater ones: they are quicksighted to spy a mote in a brother's eye, but are not sensible of a beam in their own.—Henry.

NO. 427.—THE STRAIT GATE.

vii. 13. *Enter ye in at the strait gate.*

At the banquet of the ancients, the guests entered by a *gate* designed to receive them: hence Christ, by whom we enter into the marriage feast, compares himself to a gate.—John x. 1, 9. This gate, on the coming of the guests, was made narrow, the wicket only being left open, and the porter standing to prevent the unbidden from rushing in. When the guests were arrived, the door was shut, and not to be opened to those who stood and knocked without. So the parable of the ten virgins.—*Whitby.*

The gate is strait, but, blessed be God, it is not shut up, nor locked against us, nor kept with a flaming sword, as it will be shortly.—Chap. xxv. 10.

Henry.

NO. 428.—MANNER OF DELIVERING SPEECHES AMONG THE SCRIBES.

vii. 29. *He taught them as one having authority, and not as the Scribes.*

When the *Scribes* delivered any thing to the people, they used to say, “Our Rabbins,” or, “Our wise men, say so.” Such as were on the side of Hillel, made use of his name; and those who were on the side of Shammai, made use of his. Scarcely ever would they venture to say any thing as of themselves. But Christ spake boldly of himself, and did not go about to support his doctrine by the testimony of the Elders.

Gill.

NO. 429.—CITIZENSHIP AMONG THE JEWS.

ix. 1. *And came into his own city.*

The *city* here spoken of was Capernaum, where

Christ chiefly dwelt, and paid tribute as an inhabitant. According to the Jewish canons, he was entitled to citizenship by dwelling there twelve months, or by purchasing a dwelling-house. One or other of these things it is probable Christ had done, and on which account the city is denominated his.—*Gill.*

When the Gadarenes desired Christ to depart, they of Capernaum received him. If Christ be insulted by some, yet is he honored by others.

NO. 430.—CHILDREN OF THE BRIDE-CHAMBER.

*ix. 15. Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn,
as long as the bridegroom is with them?*

Great mirth and cheerfulness accompanied the celebration of nuptials amongst the Jews. The *children of the bride-chamber* were the friends and acquaintances of the parties, and assisted in those rejoicings. But to set some bounds to their exultations, a singular ceremony was introduced, according to the Rabbins:—a glass vessel was brought into the company and broken to pieces, in order that they might restrain their joy, and not run to excess. Mar, the son of Rabbena, made wedding feasts for his son, and invited the Rabbins; and when he saw that their mirth exceeded its bounds, he brought forth a glass cup, worth four hundred zuzees, and broke it before them; whereupon they became sad. The reason which they assign for this action is, because it is forbidden a man to fill his mouth with laughter.—

Lightfoot.

NO. 431.—THE HEM OF THE GARMENT.

ix. 20. Behold a woman which was diseased with an

issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment.

This woman having probably been a witness of the wonderful miracles wrought by Jesus Christ, was convinced that he was a divine person, and that every thing belonging to him was sacred; and therefore, as, according to the custom of the Eastern nations, to kiss the fringe of any consecrated robe was an act of the most profound reverence, so by touching the *hem* of our Saviour's *garment*, she was persuaded that she should not only pay him the greatest respect, but dispose him to pity her, and heal her disease; which was instantly done.

In consequence of the humble appearance of Christ upon earth, the garment which he wore was not ornamented with that striking appendage which usually adorned the borders of the Eastern garments.* Had his garment been in the prevailing fashion of the East, the woman probably would have been represented as touching the fringe of his garment, instead of its hem.—*Burder.*

NO. 432.—MINSTRELS JOINED WITH MOURNING.

ix. 23. *And saw the minstrels, and the people making a noise.*

Biddulph, a Chaplain to the English factory at Aleppo in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, was surprised at observing that the women in the Holy Land used instruments of music in their lamentations, and that before the melancholy event happened to which their wailing referred. He says, “while I was at Saphetta, many Turks departed from thence to-

wards Mecca, in Arabia. The same morning they went, we saw many women playing with timbrels as they went along the streets, who made a shrieking as if they cried. This was mourning the departure of their husbands who were gone on pilgrimage to Mecca, and whom they feared that they should never see again.

Irwin, speaking of a merchant that was murdered in the desert between Ghinnah and Cosaire, tells us, "the tragedy which was lately acted near Cosaire, gave birth to a mournful procession of females, which passed through the different streets of Ghinnah this morning, and uttered dismal cries for the death of Mahomed. In the centre was a female of his family, who carried a naked sword in her hand, to intimate the weapon by which the deceased fell.—At sundry places the procession stopped, and danced around the sword; to the music of timbrels and tabors. It would be dangerous to face the frantic company; whose constant clamour and extravagant gestures give them all the appearance of the female Bacchanals of Thrace, recorded of old. The female relations of the deceased make a tour through the town, morning and night, for a week, beating their breasts, throwing ashes on their heads, and displaying every artificial token of sorrow.—*Harmer.*

NO. 433.—DESCRIPTION OF EASTERN PURSES.

x. 9. *Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey.*

Clothed as the Eastern people were, with long robes, girdles were indispensably necessary to bind together their flowing vestments. They were worn about the

waist, and properly confined their loose garments. These girdles were so contrived as to be used for *purses*; and they are still so worn in the East. Dr. Shaw, speaking of the dress of the Arabs of Barbary, says, “the girdles of these people are usually of worsted, very artfully woven into a variety of figures, and made to wrap several times about their bodies; one end of them being doubled, and sewed along the edges, serves them for a purse.” The Roman soldiers used, in like manner, to carry their money in their girdles. In Aulus Gellius, C. Gracchus is introduced, saying, those girdles which I carried out full of money, when I went from Rome, I have, at my return from the province, brought home empty. Olearius informs us, that the Persians carry a dagger, a knife, a hand-kerchief, and their money wrapped up in their girdle; and such as follow the profession of writing out books, carry their ink-horn, their pen-knife, and their whet-stone. The *scrip* was a leathern pouch, hung about their necks, in which they carry their victuals. That this is but a temporary precept is manifest from Luke xxii. 36. *Now he that hath a purse let him take it, and likewise his scrip.*—*Burder, &c.*

NO. 434.—HEATHEN-DUST SHAKEN OFF BY THE JEWS.

x. 14. *Shake off the dust of your feet.*

Gill says, in these words there seems to be an allusion to some maxims and customs of the Jews, with respect to the dust of Heathen countries. With them, all dust which comes from the land of the Gentiles is reckoned defiling: hence they would not suffer herbs to be brought out of an Heathen country

into the land of Israel, lest Heathen-dust should be brought along with them.

To *shake off the dust*, signified a renunciation of connexion with them, and placing them on a level with the Heathen.—*Burder, &c.*

NO. 435.—MANNER OF SCOURGING AMONG THE JEWS.

x. 17. *They will scourge you in their synagogues.*

This punishment was very common amongst the Jews, and was inflicted with thongs made of an ox's hide. The Rabbins reckoned up one hundred and sixty-eight faults liable to this penalty. The offender was stripped from his shoulders to his middle, and tied by his arms to a pretty low pillar, that he might lean forward, and that the executioner might more easily come at his back. It is said that they never gave more or less than thirty-nine strokes, but that in greater faults, they struck with proportionable violence.

After the stripping of the criminal, the executioner mounted upon a stone, to have more power over him, and then *scourged* him, both on the back and breasts, in open court before the Judges. During this process, the principal Judge proclaimed with a loud voice, *If thou observe not to do all the words of this law, &c.* Deut. xxviii. 58.; adding, *keep therefore the words of this covenant.*—Deut. xxix. 9.; and concluding at last with the words of the Psalmist—but *he being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity.*—Psalm lxxviii. 38.

Lightfoot says, “by *synagogues*, we may understand here, not the place of public worship, but

assemblies, where three Magistrates, chosen out of the principal members of the synagogue, presided to adjust differences among the people: these had power to condemn to the scourge, but not to death."

Burder, &c.

NO 436—MIMICRY OF CHILDREN IN THE MARKETS.

xi. 17. *We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced: we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.*

It was the custom of children among the Jews, to imitate in their sports what they had seen done by others. When the musician began a tune on his instrument, it was usual for the company to dance to his pipe. So also in funerals, when the women began the mournful song, the rest followed lamenting and beating their breasts. These things the children acted and personated in the streets in play, and the rest not following the leader, as usual, gave occasion to this speech,—*We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced: we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented:*—*Burder.*

Thus the Pharisees and Lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves.—Luke vii. 30.

NO. 437.—METHOD OF EXPRESSING AFFECTION.

xii. 50. *Whosoever shall do the will of my father who is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.*

We meet with many instances of language remarkably similar to these words of our Lord. In the Iliad, Andromache says to Hector, thou art my father, my

mother, and my brother. When Martial would describe the love of Gellia for her jewels, he says, these she calls her brothers and sisters. Epictetus observes, that a man's own welfare and advantage is to him brother, father, kindred, country, and God.—

Burder.

Those are the best acknowledged relatives to Christ, who are united to him by spiritual ties, and who are become one with him by the indwelling of his spirit. We generally suppose, that Christ's relatives must have shared much of his affectionate attention; and doubtless they did: but here we find, that whosoever does the will of God is equally esteemed by him. What an encouragement for fervent attachment to God!—*Clarke.*

NO. 438.—BIRDS, GREAT DESTROYERS OF CORN.

xiii. 4. *And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up.*

This circumstance has no difficulty in our conception of it, but it would strike an Eastern imagination more forcibly than ours. Thevenot says, “I saw several peasants running about the corn-fields, who raised loud shouts, and clacked their whips, to drive away the birds, which devour all their corn. When they see flocks of them coming from a neighbouring ground, that they may not light on theirs, they redouble their cries to make them go farther. The truth is, that there are so many sparrows in Persia, that they destroy all things: and scare-crows are so far from frightening them, that they even perch upon them.”—*Burder.*

NO. 439.—INSTANCES OF UNFEELING BARBARIETY.

xiv. 11. *His head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel.*

Similar instances of unfeeling barbarity are to be met with in history. Mark Antony caused the heads of those he had proscribed to be brought to him while he was at table, and entertained his eyes a long time with that sad spectacle. Cicero's head, being one of those that were brought to him, he ordered it be put on the very pulpit where Cicero had made speeches against him.

Jerome informs us, that when the head of the Baptist was presented to Herodias, she indulged herself in the barbarous diversion of pricking his tongue with a needle, as Fulvia did Tully's.—*Burder, &c.*

The haughty Herods soon shall bow
Beneath thy iron rod;
And all the base Herodias' know
Twas vain to fight with God.

BRACKENBURY:

NO. 440.—JEWS CALLED BASKET-BEARERS.

xiv. 20. *They took up of the fragments that remained, twelve baskets full.*

The reason why they were so easily supplied with such a number of *baskets* in a desert place, might have originated in a custom which the Jews had of carrying baskets with hay and straw, in commemoration of what they did in Egypt, when they were obliged to go about to pick up straw to make bricks, and carried those bricks about in baskets; which baskets, it appears, were hung about their necks: hence Martial calls a Jew a basket-bearer.—*Burder.*

The poorer Jews who had not houses of their own, capacious enough for their entertainments upon the feast days, in the city of Rome, used to hire the grove which was anciently dedicated to Egeria, and meet there. They carried their provisions in baskets of hay: for this the Romans derided them, and called the basket and hay, the Jews' household stuff.

—now the sacred shades and founts are hir'd
By banish'd Jews, who their whole wealth can lay
In a small basket on a whisp of hay.

DRYDEN.

NO. 441.—GIFTS CONSECRATED TO GOD.

xv. 5. *It is a gift; by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me.*

The Jews frequently used to bind themselves by vow or execration to do nothing beneficial to a neighbour, &c. This was called *corban*. This was used by them even against their own parents; and though contrary to the precept of honoring and relieving them, was nevertheless considered as obligatory. Many cases are to be found, in Maimonides and the Rabbins of this kind; and this is probably the crime which was charged upon the Pharisees by Christ. But that which is more ordinarily received by the ancients, and which Origen had from an Hebrew, is, that *corban* is a gift consecrated to God: and so saith Theophylact. The Pharisees persuading children to give nothing to their parents, but to consecrate all to the treasury of the temple, taught them to say, “O Father, that whereby thou mightest be profited (relieved) by me, is a gift.” Thus the children divided with them all they had, leaving the poor parents without any relief in their old age.—*Hammond.*

NO. 442.—SIGNS OF THE WEATHER.

xvi. 3. *Ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?*

There are certain signs of fair and foul weather, which ye are in the constant habit of observing, and which do not fail—*the signs of the times*. The doctrine which I preach, and the miracles which I work among you, are as sure signs that the day-spring from on high has visited you for your salvation; but if ye refuse to hear, and continue in darkness, the red and gloomy cloud of vindictive justice shall pour out such a storm of wrath upon you, as shall sweep you from the face of the earth.

The signs of fair and foul weather were observed in a similar manner among the Romans, and indeed among most other people.—*Clarke.*

If fi'ry red, his glowing globe descends,
High winds and furious tempests he portends :
But if his cheeks are swoln with livid blue,
He bodes wet weather, by his watery hue ;
If dusky spots are varied on his brow,
And streak'd with red, a troubled color show ;
That sullen mixture shall at once declare,
Wind, rain, and storms, and elemental war.

DRYDEN.

NO. 443.—TRIBUTE, A TAX FOR THE TEMPLE.

xvii. 24. *They that received tribute-money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute?*

This was not a tax to be paid to the Roman government, but a tax for the support of the temple. The law—Exod. xxx. 13. obliged every male among the Jews to pay half a shekel yearly for the support of the temple; and this was continued by them, wherever dispersed, 'till after the time of Vespasian, who

ordered it to be paid into the Roman treasury. The word in the text, which is generally translated *tribute*, signifies the didrachma, or two drachms. This piece of money was about the value of two Attic drachms, each equal to fifteen pence of our money.—*Clarke.*

The demand was very modest: the Collectors stood in such awe of Christ, because of his mighty works, that they durst not speak to him about it, but applied themselves to Peter, whose house was in Capernaum; and probably in his house Christ lodged; he therefore was fittest to be spoken to as the house-keeper, and they presumed he knew his master's mind. Their question is, *Doth not your master pay tribute?* Some think, that they sought an occasion against him; designing, if he refused, to represent him as disaffected to the temple service, and his followers as a lawless people, that would pay *neither toll, tribute, nor custom.*—*Ezra iv. 13.—Henry.*

NO. 444.—PUNISHMENT BY DROWNING.

xviii. 6. *It were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.*

Grotius observes, that the kind of punishment here alluded to was not used among the Jews, but that it was practised by the ancient Syrians. Casaubon relates, that the tutor and ministers of Caius Cæsar, for taking the opportunity of his sickness and death, to infest and ruin the province by their pride and covetousness, were, with a heavy weight put about their necks, thrown headlong into a river. It may be observed also, that when the punishment of drowning was inflicted, the persons condemned were rolled up in sheets of lead and so cast into the water.—*Burder.*

NO. 445.—CHILDREN SOLD TO PAY THE PARENTS' DEBTS.

xviii. 25. *His Lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.*

It was not only the custom of the Jews, to come upon children for the debts of their parents, but of other nations also. With the Athenians, if a father could not pay his debts, the son was obliged to do it, and to be kept in bonds 'till he did. Grotius proves, from Plutarch and Dionysius Halicarnassensis, that children were sold by the creditors of their parents in Asia, at Athens, and at Rome.—*Burder.*

It is indispensably necessary to pardon and peace, that we not only *do justly*, but *love mercy*. It is an essential part of that religion which is *pure and undefiled before God and the Father*, of that wisdom from above, which is *gentle and easy to be intreated*. *They shall have judgment without mercy, that have shewed no mercy.*—Jam. ii. 13.—*Henry.*

NO. 446.—PARTICULAR KINDS OF SALUTATION.

xviii. 26. *The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him.*

Sandys informs us, that the common salutation is performed by laying the right hand on the bosom, and a little declining the body; but when they salute a person of great rank, they bow almost to the ground, and kiss the *hem of his garment*. Shaw says, that the inferior Arabs, out of respect, kiss the garments, the knees, and even the feet of their superiors. Thus our Lord represents a servant as falling down at his master's feet when he had a favour to beg; and an inferior servant as paying the same compliment to the

first, who was, it seems, a servant of a higher class. In like manner the Evangelist Luke tells us, that Jairus fell down at our Lord's feet, when he begged he would go and heal his daughter.—Chap. viii. 41. He represents the woman troubled with the *issue of blood* as touching the hem of his garment; which, perhaps, means kissing it.

Curtius tells us, that Alexander, after the conquest of Asia, expected to be treated according to the modes of Persia, where Kings were reverenced after the manner of the gods: he therefore suffered the people in token of their respect, to lie upon the ground before him. These expressions of reverence were too great for mortals: hence, when Cornelius fell down before Peter, the Apostle said, *stand up; I myself also am a man.*—Acts x. 26.—Harmer.

NO. 447.—CRUELTY OF EASTERN TORMENTORS.

xviii. 34. *And his Lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors.*

Campbell says, that the word translated *tmentor* denotes one who has it in charge to examine by torture. These men were not only allowed, but even commanded, to treat the wretches in their custody with every kind of cruelty, in order to extort payment from them, in case they had concealed any of their effects; or, if they had nothing, to wrest the sum they owed from the compassion of their relations and friends, who, to release an unhappy person from such extreme misery, might be induced to pay the debt: the person of the insolvent debtor was absolutely in the power of the creditor, and at his disposal. Doddridge says, that state criminals especially, are not only forced to

submit to a very mean and scanty allowance, but are frequently loaded with clogs, or yokes of heavy wood, in which they cannot either lie or sit at ease ; and by frequent scourgings, and sometimes by racking, are quickly brought to an untimely end.—*Burder.*

NO. 448.—MANNER OF SITTING IN THE SANHEDRIM.

xx. 21. Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.

In the preceding chapter our Lord had promised his disciples, that they should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes. Salome, probably hearing of this, and understanding it literally, came to request the chief dignities in this new church for her sons : and it appears it was at their instigation that she made this request ; for Mark, chap. x. 35. informs us, that these brethren themselves made the request ; i. e. they made it through the medium of their mother.

That the sons of Zebedee wished for ecclesiastical, rather than secular honors, may be thought probable, from the allusion that is made here to the supreme dignities in the great Sanhedrim. The Prince of the Sanhedrim (Hanasi) sat in the midst of two rows of Senators, or Elders ; on his right hand sat the person termed Ab, the father of the Sanhedrim, and on his left the Chacham, or sage. These persons transacted all business in the absence of the President. The authority of this counsel was at some periods very great, and extended to a multitude of matters both ecclesiastical and civil. These appear to have been

the honors which James and John sought. They seem to have strangely forgot the lesson they had learnt from the transfiguration.—Clarke.

NO. 449.—A MAN'S CUP, CALLED HIS PORTION.

xx. 23. *Ye shall drink indeed of my cup.*

It was antiently the custom, at great entertainments, for the governor of the feast to appoint to his guests the kind and proportion of wine which they were to drink, and what he thus appointed them it was thought a breach of good manners, either to refuse or not drink up; hence a man's *cup*, both in sacred and profane authors, came to signify the portion, whether of good or evil, which befalls him in this world. Thus Homer introduces Achilles comforting Priam for the loss of his son:—

Two urns by Jove's high throne have ever stood,
The source of evil one, and one of good :
From thence the cup of mortal man he fills,
Blessings to those, to these distributes ills ;
To most he mingleth both ; the wretch decreed
To taste the bad unmix'd is curs'd indeed :
Pursued by wrongs, by meagre famine driv'n,
He wanders, outcast both of earth and heav'n.
The happiest taste not happiness sincere,
But find the cordial draught is dash'd with care.

ILIA.D.

Similar to this is what we meet with in Psalm lxxv. 8. *In the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red ; it is full of mixture, and he poureth out of the same ; but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out and drink them.* What Christ means by the expression, we cannot be at a loss to

understand; since, in two remarkable passages, Luke xxii. 42, and John xviii. 11, he has been his own interpreter. To taste death, was a common phrase among the Jews, and from them we have reason to believe that our Lord borrowed it.—*Burder.*

NO. 450.—BRANCHES STREWED IN THE WAY OF PRINCES.

xxi. 8. 9. *Others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way, &c.*

It was usual in the East to strew flowers and branches of trees in the way of conquerors and great Princes. Herodotus says, that when Xerxes crossed the Hellespont, the people burnt all manner of perfumes on the bridges, and strewed the way with myrtles. Doubdan says, that when he was in the Holy Land, the Eastern Christians made one of their processions to the church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, some of whom carried sacks of rose leaves, which were scattered among the people and strewed upon the pavement about the sepulchre of our Lord. If rose-bushes grew upon Mount Olivet, the people might very naturally have cut off *branches* full of roses, and shaking them, strew the path of our Lord with the beautiful but untenacious leaves of those flowers. The word *them*, in our version, which seems to refer to the branches themselves, it is to be remembered, is not in the original, but a supplement of our translators. Maillet says, “When the only son of that magnificent person who was the Bashaw of Egypt in 1696, was passing along in a grand procession, in order to be circumcised, the way was all strewed with flowers, and the air rang with acclamations and cries of joy.”

The use of boughs and hymns was common amongst the Greeks in any time of sacred festivity. Thus when our Lord entered Jerusalem with something of state, those who acknowledged him to be the Messiah, not only strewed branches in the way, but cried *Hosanna to the son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!*

Let mortals ne'er refuse to take
Th' hosanna on their tongues,
Lest rocks and stones should rise and break
Their silence into songs.

WATTS.

NO. 451.—PROVERBIAL SPEECH AMONG THE JEWS.

xxi. 21. *If ye have faith and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig-tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.*

Removing mountains, and rooting up mountains, are phrases very generally used to signify the removing or conquering great difficulties,—getting through perplexities. So many of the Rabbins are termed, rooters up of mountains, because they were dextrous in removing difficulties, solving cases of conscience, &c. In this sense our Lord's words are to be understood. He that has *faith* will get through every difficulty and perplexity; mountains shall become mole-hills or plains before him. The saying is neither to be taken in its literal sense, nor is it hyperbolical: it is a proverbial form of speech, which no Jew could misunderstand, and with which no Christian ought to be puzzled.—Clarke.

NO. 452.—TIME OF FRUIT AMONG THE JEWS.

xxi. 34. *And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it.*

The fruit of all manner of trees for the first three years was not to be eaten, nor any profit made of it: in the fourth year it was to be holy, to praise the Lord; being either given to the Priests, or eaten by the owners before the Lord at Jerusalem: in the fifth year it might be eaten and made use of for profit, and thenceforward every year. To this time of fruit, and the custom of bringing it up to Jerusalem, there seems to be an allusion in the words before us.

Gill.

This is an allusion to the ancient custom of paying the rent of a farm in kind; that is, by a part of the produce of the farm. This custom anciently prevailed in most nations; and still prevails in the highlands of Scotland, and in some other places. The Boldon book, a survey made of the bishopric of Durham in 1183, shews how much of the rents was paid in cows, sheep, pigs, fowls, eggs, &c. the remaining part being made up, chiefly by manual labour.

The servants were the Prophets which from time to time were sent to the Jewish nation, to call back both Priests and people to the purity of God's holy religion.—*Clarke.*

NO. 453.—CONDESCENSION OF EASTERN NOBLES.

xxii. 9. *Go ye therefore into the highways and as many as ye shall find bid to the marriage.*

Notwithstanding there is so much distance kept up between superiors and inferiors in those countries,

yet we find them, in some cases, more condescending than the great among us. Dr. Pococke, speaking of an entertainment made by the Governor of an Egyptian village for the Cashif * with whom he travelled, says, “the custom was for every one, when he had done eating, to get up, wash his hands and take a draught of water, and so in a continual succession, ‘till the poor came in and ate up all. The Arabs never set by any thing that is brought to table ; so that when they kill a sheep they dress it all, call in their neighbours and the poor, and finish every thing.” In giving an account of the diet of the Eastern people, he says, that an Arab Prince will often dine in the street before his door, and call to all that pass, even beggars, in the usual expression of “Bismillah” that is, “in the name of God.” Such as accept of the invitation, sit down ; and when they have done eating, they retire with the usual form of returning thanks. Here we see that the picture which our Lord exhibits of a King making a great feast, and when the guests refused to come, sending for the poor, the maimed, the halt and the blind, is not so much unlike life, as perhaps we have been ready to imagine.—*Harmer.*

NO. 454.—WEDDING GARMENTS PROVIDED FOR THE GUESTS.

xxii. 11. And when the King came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding-garment.

Some writers tell us, that it was usual for persons to appear at marriage-feasts in a sumptuous dress, generally adorned with florid embroidery ; but as it could not be expected that travellers, thus pressed in,

* Governor of a district in that country.

should themselves be provided with it, we must conclude, both from the magnificence of princely wardrobes, and the resentment against this guest, that a robe was offered, but refused by him. The following extract will shew the necessity of having a suitable garment:—“The next day the King sent to invite the Ambassadors to dine with him. The Mehemander told them, it was the custom that they should wear over their own clothes the best of those garments which the King had sent them. The Ambassadors at first made some scruple of that compliance; but when they were told that it was a custom observed by all Ambassadors, and that no doubt the King would take it very ill, if they presented themselves before him without the marks of his liberality, they at last consented to do it; and after their example, all the rest of the retinue.”—(*Ambassadors' Travels.*)—

Burder.

NO. 455.—NO MARRIAGES IN HEAVEN.

xxii. 30. *In the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage.*

This declaration of Christ, is directly contrary to the opinion and practice of some of the ancient idolaters, and particularly the Persians. From a notion, that married people were peculiarly happy, in a future state, they used often to hire persons to be espoused to such of their relations as had died in celibacy.—Richardson.

One great reason of marriage was to supply the gaps occasioned in the world by death; but when men are no longer subject to death, there will be no need of conjugal relations among them, any more than among the angels.—Pool.

NO 456.—LAWS HUNG UP FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION.

xxii. 40. *On these two commandments hang all the law and the Prophets.*

These words allude to a custom, mentioned by Tertullian, of writing the laws and hanging them up in a public place, that they might be seen by all the people. It imports, that in these two commandments is contained all that *the law and the Prophets* require, in reference to our duty to God and man; for though there are some precepts of temperance which we owe to ourselves, yet they are such as we may be inclined to perform from the true love of God and of our neighbour. The love of God will preserve us from impatience, discontent, and evil dealings,—it will make us watchful over ourselves to keep a good conscience, as being solicitous for our eternal welfare; and the love of our neighbour will restrain us from all angry passions, such as envy and malice, which arise against him; so that these *two commandments* may be very justly called, **an abridgment or compendium of the whole scriptures.**—*Whitby.*

Pure love to God thy members find,
Pure love to every soul of man;
And in thy sober, spotless mind,
Saviour, our heaven on earth we gain.

NO. 457.—THE BUSINESS OF THE SCRIBES.

xxiii. 2. *The Scribes.*

Most authors reduce the *Scribes* to two general classes—civil and ecclesiastical *Scribes*. Of the civil *Scribes* there were various ranks and degrees, from the common *Scrivener* to the principal *Secretary of State*. The next *Scribe* in office was probably the *Secretary of War*; called, the *principal Scribe of the*

host.—2 Kings xxv. 19. It is reasonably supposed, this is the officer referred to in Isaiah xxxiii. 18. We read of the Scribes, as well as the Officers and Porters, that were of the tribe of Levi.—2 Chron. xxxiv. 13. It is probable that some of these were Under-Secretaries and Clerks to the principal Scribes; others of them might be Scriveners employed in drawing deeds and contracts, and in writing letters, and any other business of penmanship. Such Scribes are referred to in Psalm xlv. 1.—*My tongue is as the pen of a ready writer.* Others of these inferior Scribes might be Schoolmasters, who, as the Jewish Doctors tell us, were chiefly of the tribe of Simeon; and they add, that Jacob's prophetic curse upon this tribe, that they should be divided in Jacob, and scattered in Israel—Gen. xlix. 7, was hereby accomplished.

The ecclesiastical Scribes, who are frequently mentioned in the New Testament, were the learned of the nation, who expounded the law, and taught it to the people, and are therefore sometimes called *Doctors of the law.* The *Lawyers* mentioned in the New Testament were the Scribes. Compare Matt. xxii. 35. with Mark xii. 28. Scribe was a general name or title of all who studied, and were teachers of the law and of religion.—Isai. ix. 15. They were the preaching Clergy among the Jews; while the Priests attended the sacrifice, the Scribes instructed the people. It appears, however, that what they taught chiefly related to the traditions of the Fathers; that it was about external, carnal, and trivial rites; and that it was very litigious and disputatious.—Jennings.

NO. 458.—DESCRIPTION OF THE PHYLACTERIES.

xxiii. 5. They make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments.

The *phylacteries* were four sections of the law, written on parchments, folded up in the skin of a clean beast, and tied to the head and hand. The four sections were the following:—Exod. xiii. 2. 11; Exod. xiii. 11. 17; Déut. vi. 4. 10; Dent. xi. 13. 22. Those that were for the head were written and rolled up separately, and put in four distinct places in one skin, which was fastened with strings to the crown of the head, towards the face. Those that were for the hands were written in four columns on one parchment; which, being rolled up, was fastened to the inside of the left arm, between the shoulder and the elbow, that it might be over against the heart.—*Gill.*

In order to a right understanding of this passage, we must have recourse to Num. xv. 37. 38. The Pharisees, to shew their zeal for the law of God, made their phylacteries and ribbands broader, and their fringes much longer, than those of other men.—

Burder, &c.

NO. 459.—GNATS STRAINED OUT OF WINE.

xxiii. 24. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

This is an allusion to a custom the Jews had of filtering their wine, for fear of swallowing any insect forbidden by the law as unclean. Maimonides affords a remarkable illustration of our Saviour's proverbial expression. He who *strains* wine, or vinegar, or

strong drink, and eats the *gnats*, or flies, or worms, which he hath strained off, is whipped."

Serrarius says, that in those hot countries, gnats were apt to fall into wine, if it were not carefully covered: hence they passed the liquor through a strainer, that no gnat, or any part of one, might remain; which finally grew into a proverb for exactness about little matters.—*Burder.*

Thus the Pharisees were scrupulous in indifferent things, and licentious in affairs of moment.

NO. 460.—DESCRIPTION OF EASTERN TOMBS.

xxiii. 27. *Ye are like unto whitened sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.*

Windus says, that the tombs among the Mahommeh-dans are generally cupolas, with an entrance as wide as the building. They are of different forms, and the body is put in the middle. The tomb of Alcayde Ali Ben Abdallah is a great square, of thirty feet at least. He speaks of a saint, who has a monument at Sidi Cassem, to which the Moors resort to say their prayers; and adds, that many more saints are buried in the road to Mequinez, having little monuments over them. Travellers are shewn a handsome structure near Jerusalem, which is supposed to be the tomb of Zecharias, *slain between the temple and the altar.* He says, that after their death perhaps some great man hears of their fame, and makes it an act of devotion to beautify their tombs, or, if they had none, to build one over their grave, wherein they are laid. Hence it is not to be wondered at, that it was some time before the persecuted and murdered Jewish Pro-

phets had tombs raised over them ; and some of them might not have been erected 'till the time, or very near the time of our Lord.

By *garnishing* may be understood, the whitening of these tombs ; which is commonly done in Barbary. Among the Jews this custom was probably universal, to warn the people not to approach too nigh, lest they should be defiled. Among the Mahomedans, the tombs of their saints are adorned with lamps. Pitts says, that the tomb of Mahomed has nearly an hundred lamps. Maundrell, speaking of a mosque on the coast of Syria, in which Sultan Ibrahim is deposited, says, "we found it a great wooden chest erected over the grave, and covered with a carpet of painted calico, extending on all sides down to the ground, adorned with wooden beads: this is the usual way of adorning among the Turks." Chardin, describing the tomb of a Persian female saint, speaks of several vessels of silver which hang over it, of considerable weight. The tomb is inclosed with a grate of silver, ten feet high, and crowned at the corners with four large balls of solid gold.

The formalists confound, convert,
And to thy people join;
And break and fill the broken heart
With confidence divine!

NO. 461.—MANNER OF REPRESENTING GREAT COMMOTIONS.

xxiv. 29. *Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from Heaven, and the powers of the Heavens shall be shaken.*

Commentators generally understand this, and what follows, of the end of the world, and Christ's coming to judgment: but the word *immediately*, shews that our Lord is not speaking of any distant event, but of something immediately consequent on calamities already predicted; and that must be the destruction of Jerusalem. “The Jewish heaven shall perish, and the *sun* and *moon* of its glory and happiness shall be darkened—brought to nothing. The sun is the religion of the church: the moon is the government of the state; and the stars are the judges and doctors of both.”*—*Lightfoot.*

In the prophetic language, great commotions upon earth are often represented under the notion of commotions and changes in the Heavens. The fall of Babylon is represented, by the stars and constellations of Heaven withdrawing their light, and the sun and moon being darkened—Isa. xiii. 9, 10: the destruction of Egypt, by the Heaven being covered, the sun enveloped with a cloud, and the moon withholding her light—Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8: the destruction of the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes, is represented by casting down some of the host of Heaven, and the stars, to the ground—Dan. viii. 10; and this very destruction of Jerusalem, is represented by the Prophet Joel, chap. ii. 30, 31, by shewing wonders in Heaven and in Earth—*darkening the sun, and turning the moon into blood.* This general mode of describing these judgments, leaves no room to doubt the propriety of its application in the present case.

The falling of stars, i. e. those meteors which

* Isa. xiii. 10.—Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8.

are called *falling stars* by the common people, was deemed an omen of evil times.—Clarke.

And oft, before tempestuous winds arise,
The seeming stars fall headlong from the skies,
And, shooting through the darkness, gild the night
With sweeping glories, and long trails of light.

DRYDEN.

Again the poet sings:—

The sun reveals the secrets of the sky,
And who dares give the source of light the lie?
The change of empires often he declares,
Fierce tumults, hidden treasons, open wars.
He first the fate of Cæsar did foretel,
And pitied Rome, when Rome in Cæsar fell;
In iron clouds conceal'd the public light,
And impious mortals found eternal night.

DRYDEN.

NO. 462.—PUNISHMENT OF SAWING ASUNDER.

xxiv. 51. *And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites.*

If this expression be understood in its literal sense, it must be an allusion to the terrible punishment of inflicting death with the saw; which, according to tradition, the Prophet Isaiah suffered. Dr. Shaw says, this method of executing criminals is practised by the western Moors in Barbary. Calmet says, that this punishment was not unknown among the Hebrews. It came originally from the Persians, or the Chaldeans. It is still in use among the Switzers; and they practised it not many years ago on one of their countrymen guilty of a great crime, in the plain of Grenelles, near Paris. They put him into a kind of coffin, and sawed him at length, beginning at the head, as a piece of wood is sawn. Parisates, King of Persia, caused Roxana to be sawn in two alive. Valerius Maximus

says, that the Thracians sometimes made living men undergo this torture. The laws of the twelve tables; which the Romans had borrowed from the Greeks, condemned certain crimes to the punishment of the saw. Caius Caligula, the Emperor, often condemned people of condition to be sawn in two through the middle.—*Burder.*

Xerxes ordered one of the sons of Pythius to be cut in two, and one half placed on each side of the way, that his army might pass through between them.

NO. 463.—TREATMENT OF A NEW MARRIED COUPLE.

xxv. 6: And at midnight there was cry made, Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.

It was the custom among the ancient Greeks, to conduct the new married couple home with torches or lamps. Thus Homer describes a marriage procession:—

The sacred pomp and genial feast delight,
And solemn dance, and hymeneal right;
Along the street the new made brides are led,
With torches flaming, to the nuptial bed.
The youthful dancers in a circle bound
To the soft flute and cithern's silver sound;
Through the fair streets the matrons in a row
Stand in their porches, and enjoy the show.

ILIADE.

A like custom is still observed among the Pagan East Indians.—“On the day of their marriage, the husband and wife, being both in the same palanquin, go out between seven and eight o'clock at night, accompanied with all their kindred and friends: the trumpets and drums go before them; and they are lighted by a multitude of massals, which are a kind of flambeaux. The new married couple go abroad in

this equipage for the space of some hours, after which they return to their own house, where the women and domestics wait for them. The whole house is enlightened with little lamps; and many of those massals already mentioned are kept ready for their arrival, besides those that accompany them and go before the palanquin." The Roman ladies also were led home to their husbands' houses in the evening by the light of torches.—*Burder.*

The parable of the ten virgins is an allusion to Jewish customs. It was usual for the *bridegroom* to bring home the bride in the evening. At this season the bridegroom used to invite ten of his young female friends to come to his house, where they waited with lamps 'till word was brought that the bridegroom was at hand; then they went forth to welcome him with the bride into the house; for which kindness they were admitted as guests at the marriage feast.—

Dodd.

NO. 464.—MANNER OF PLACING PERSONS IN THE SANHEDRIM.

xxv. 33. *He shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.*

This seems to allude to the custom in the Sanhedrim, where the Jews placed those to be acquitted on the *right hand*, and those to receive sentence of condemnation on the *left*.—*Whitby.*

The right hand, among the Rabbins, signifies, approbation and eminence: the left hand, rejection and disapprobation. Hence in Sohar Chadash it is said, "the right hand is given, the left also is given. To the Israelites and the Gentiles are given, Paradise

and Hell—this world and the world to come.” The right and left were emblematical of endless beatitude and endless misery, amongst the Romans: Hence Virgil :—

Here in two ample roads the way divides,
The right direct, our destin'd journey guides
By Pluto's palace, to the Elysian plains :
The left to Tartarus, where bound in chains
Loud howl the damn'd in everlasting pains.

Pilt.

Of the good and faithful servants he approves, and therefore exalts them to his glory : of the slothful and wicked he disapproves, and casts them into Hell.

Sheep, which have ever been considered as the emblems of mildness, simplicity, patience, and usefulness, represent here the genuine disciples of Christ.

Goats, which are naturally quarrelsome, lascivious, and excessively ill-scented, were considered as the symbols of riotous, profane, and impure men. They here represent all who have lived and died in their sins.—Ezek. xxiv. 17.—Zech. x. 3.—*Clarke.*

NO. 465.—ASKING A BLESSING UPON BREAD.

xxvi. 26. *Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.*

Though this supper is distinct from the passover, and different from any ordinary meal, yet there are in it allusions to both, and to several Jewish customs. He that asked a blessing upon bread, used to take it into his hands and say, “Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, the King of the world, who producest bread out of the earth.” The blessing always preceded the breaking of the bread. After the master of the

house had finished the blessing, and had broken the bread, he put a piece before every one present.—*Gill.*

The person of the greatest dignity amongst the Jews always pronounced the benediction on the bread and wine; for which reason our blessed Lord performed it himself, being with his disciples as their master. It is very probable that our Lord, after he had blessed and broken the bread, according to the Jewish custom, imitated also the Jews in these words—*this is my body;* for when they eat unleavened bread they say, “This is the bread of affliction which our fathers did eat in the land of Egypt.” But Christ signified to his disciples, that they were no longer required to eat that bread of affliction which their fathers had eaten, when they came out of Egypt; but that being the author of a new covenant, he gave them his own body and blood instead thereof.—*Picart.*

NO. 466.—WASHING HANDS IN TOKEN OF INNOCENCE.

xxvii. 24. *He took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person.*

It was a custom among the Hebrews, Greeks, and Latins, to *wash their hands* in token of innocence, and to shew that they were pure from any imputed guilt. In case of an undiscovered murder, the Elders of the city which was nearest to the place where the dead body was found, were required by the law, Deut. xxi. 1, 10, to wash their hands over the victim which was offered to expiate the crime, and thus make public protestation of their own innocence. As Pilate knew that Christ was *innocent*, he should

have prevented his death: he had the armed force at his command, and should have dispersed this infamous mob. Had he been charged with countenancing a seditious person, he could have easily cleared himself, had the matter been brought before the Emperor. He therefore was inexcusable.—*Clarke.*

There are two ways in which Pilate is said to have given testimony to the innocence of the life, and the reality of the death of Jesus Christ. First, by an express written to Tiberius, and by him presented to the senate; and also by records, written on tables, of all things of moment which occurred during his government. These proceedings were agreeable to a general custom, whereby all the Governors of the provinces gave an account to the Emperor of all the most remarkable occurrences. To these memorials the primitive Christians appealed, in their disputes with the Gentiles, as to a most undoubted testimony.

Pearson.

NO. 467.—THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

xxvii. 25. *His blood be on us, and on our children.*

This imprecation appears to have been remarkably fulfilled in the circumstances connected with the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. A strong correspondence may be traced between their sin and their punishment. They put Jesus to death when the nation was assembled to celebrate the pasover: and it was when the nation was assembled, to celebrate the passover, that Titus shut them up within the walls of Jerusalem. The rejection of the true Messiah was their crime; and the following of false Messiahs, to

their destruction, was their punishment. They sold and bought Jesus as a slave; and they themselves were afterwards sold and bought as slaves, at the lowest prices. They preferred a robber and a murderer to Jesus, whom they crucified between two thieves; and they themselves were afterwards infested with bands of thieves and robbers. They put Jesus to death, lest the Romans should come and take away their place and nation; and the Romans did come and take away their place and nation. They crucified Jesus before the walls of Jerusalem; and before the walls of Jerusalem they themselves were crucified in such numbers, that, it is said, room was wanting for the crosses, and crosses for the bodies.—*Newton.*

NO 468.—A CROWN OF THORNS.

xxvii. 29. *And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it on his head.*

Amongst other circumstances of suffering and ignominy, which accompanied the death of Christ, we find that they *platted a crown of thorns, and put it upon his head.* Hasselquist says, “the Naba or Nabka, of the Arabians, is in all probability the tree which afforded the crown of thorns put on the head of Christ: it grows very commonly in the East. This plant was very fit for the purpose, for it has many small and sharp spines, which are well adapted to give pain; the crown might be easily made of those soft, round, and pliant branches; and what, in my opinion, seems to be the greatest proof is, that the leaves much resemble those of ivy, as they are of a very deep green. Perhaps the enemies of Christ would have a

plant somewhat resembling that with which Emperors and Generals were used to be crowned, that there might be calumny even in the punishment."

Let the crown of thorns make those Christians blush who throw away so much time, pains, and money, in adorning a sinful head. Let the world do what it will to render the royalty and mysteries of Christ contemptible: it is my glory to serve a King thus debased; my salvation to adore that which the world despises; and my redemption to go unto God through the merits of him who was crowned with thorns.—*Quesnel.*

NO. 469.—VINEGAR GIVEN OUR LORD IN MOCKERY.

xxvii. 34. *They gave him vinegar to drink, mingled with gall.*

Medicated wine was given to Jewish criminals, when about to be put to death, to deaden their sense of pain; but they gave *vinegar* to our Lord, in mockery, as they did other things, of his claim to royalty. But the force of this does not appear, if we do not recollect the quality of the wines anciently drank by Princes, which, it seems, was of the sweet sort.—*Burder.*

That our Lord was intended to be mocked with the vinegar appears from what St. Luke tells us—chap. xxiii. 36. *The soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar.* The *gall* most probably was mixed with the vinegar by the same inhuman soldiers, and presented to our Lord from a principle of insolence and scorn!

NO. 470.—PUNISHMENT OF CRUCIFIXION.

xxvii. 35. *And they crucified him.*

When a person was crucified, he was nailed to the

cross as it lay upon the ground, through each hand, extended to its utmost stretch, and through both the feet together : the cross was then erected, and the foot of it thrust with violence into a hole prepared in the ground to receive it. By this means the weight of the whole body hung upon the nails, which went through the hands and feet, and the sufferer at last expired by the force of pain. This kind of death, which was the most cruel, shameful, and cursed death that could be devised, was used only by the Romans for slaves, and the basest of the people who were capital offenders. Sometimes a fire was kindled at the foot of the cross, that the sufferer might perish by the smoke and flame. Sometimes they who were fastened to the cross lived long in that condition. Andrew is believed to have lived three days upon it, and others nine days. Eusebius speaks of martyrs in Egypt, who were kept on the cross 'till they were starved to death. Sometimes they were devoured by birds and beasts of prey ; and generally, after death by wolves, dogs, and birds. Guards were appointed to see that none should take them down and bury them.—*Burder.*

The sun beheld it :—no, the shocking scene
 Drove back his chariot : midnight veil'd his face ;
 Not such as this ; not such as nature makes ;
 A midnight nature shudder'd to behold ;
 A midnight new ; a dread eclipse (without
 Opposing spheres) from her Creator's frown !

YOUNG.

MARK.

NO. 471.—COVERING THE AREA OF EASTERN HOUSES.

ii. 4. *They uncovered the roof where he was ; and*

when they had broken it up, they let down the bed whereon the sick of the palsy lay.

DR. SHAW says, that the houses throughout the East are generally low, having a ground floor only, or but one upper story; yet some of their houses, we know, were loftier.—Acts xx. 9. Their roofs were flat, and covered with a strong coat of plaster of terrace. They are built round a paved court, into which the entrance from the street is through a gateway, or passage-room, furnished with benches, and sufficiently large to be used for receiving visits, or transacting business.* The stairs which lead to the roof are usually in the gateway or passage-room to the court. It is customary to fix cords, from the parapet walls of the flat roofs, across this court, and upon them to expand a veil or covering, as a shelter from the heat. It was probably in this area that our Saviour taught. The paralytic was brought upon the roof by making a way through the crowd to the stairs in the gateway, or by the terraces of the adjoining houses. They rolled back the veil, and let the sick man down over the parapet of the roof into the area or court of the house, before Jesus.—*Burder.*

Isaiah seems to allude to some covering of this kind in that beautiful expression, *he stretcheth out the Heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in.*—Isa. xl. 22.

NO. 472.—TUMULT OCCASIONED BY DEATH.

v. 38. *He cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly.*

* The courts are often paved with marble, have a garden around them, and a fountain in the middle.—*Russel.*

The assembling of multitudes to the place where persons have lately expired, and bewailing them in a noisy manner, is a custom still retained in the East. Chardin tells us, that the concourse of people at such times is incredible: both the poor and the rich run thither, and make a strange noise. This, he says, is the genius of the people of Asia, especially of the women: their sentiments of joy or of grief are properly transports; and their transports are ungoverned, excessive, and outrageous. When any one returns from a long journey, or dies, his family burst into cries, that may be heard twenty doors off: this is renewed at different times, and continues many days, according to the vigour of the passion. He says, "in the year 1676, I was lodged at Ispahan, near the royal square.. The mistress of the next house to mine died at that time: the moment she expired, all the family, to the number of twenty-five or thirty people, set up such a furious cry, that I was quite startled, and it was above two hours before I could recover myself: these cries continued a long time, then ceased all at once: they began again as suddenly, at day-break, and in concert. This enraged kind of mourning continued forty days. The longest and most violent acts were, when they washed the body, when they perfumed it, when they carried it out to be interred, at making the inventory, and when they divided the effects. The greatest part of these mourners did not shed a single tear through the whole of the tragedy.—*Harmer.*

An angel's arm can't snatch me from the grave;
Legions of angels can't confine me there,

YOUNG.

NO. 473.—THE THIRSTY TRAVELLER RELIEVED.

ix. 41.—*Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink, in my name, shall not lose his reward.*

To furnish travellers with water is at this time thought a matter of such consideration, that many of the Eastern people have been at a considerable expense to procure passengers that refreshment. Dr. Chandler, speaking of Asia Minor, says, the reader, as we proceed, will find frequent mention made of fountains. Their number is owing to the nature of the country and the climate. The soil, parched and thirsty, demands moisture to aid vegetation: hence they occur, not only in the towns and villages, but in the fields and gardens, by the sides of the roads, and the beaten tracks in the mountains. Many of them are the donations of humane persons while living, or have been bequeathed as legacies on their decease. The Turks esteem the erecting of them as meritorious, and seldom go away after performing their ablutions, or drinking, without gratefully blessing the name and memory of the founder. It is common to find a cup of tin or iron hung up by a chain near those cisterns, or a wooden scoop, with a handle placed in a nich in the wall.—*Burder.*

A cup of water, in the Eastern countries, was not a matter of small worth. In India, the Hindoos go sometimes a great way to fetch it, and then boil it, that it might do the less hurt to travellers when they are hot; and after that they stand from morning to night in some great road, where there is neither pit nor rivulet, and offer it, in honor of their god, to be drunk by all passengers. This necessary work of charity, in those hot countries, seems to have been

practised by the more pious and humane Jews; and our Lord assures them, that if they do this in his name, they shall not lose their reward.—*Clarke.*

NO. 474.—DESCRIPTION OF THE VALLEY OF HINNOM.

ix. 43. *It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands, to go into Hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched.*

This is a periphrasis of Hell, and is an allusion to the valley of Hinnom, from whence Hell has its name here and elsewhere. This valley, Kimchi says, was near to Jerusalem; and was a contemptible place, where they cast carcases, bones, and other unclean and polluted matter; to consume which a continual fire was kept burning: therefore the condemnation of the wicked, in a parabolical way, is called Gehinom.—*Burder.*

In this valley of Hinnom, idolaters used to burn their children to Moloch; and in consequence of the cruelty of this idolatry, the same name was attributed to Hell.—2 Kings xxiii. 10.—Isaiah xxx. 33. It is better to deny thyself some particular indulgence, than to hazard eternal salvation by gratifying thy appetite.—*Diodati.*

NO. 475.—DIFFERENT WAYS OF FUNERAL.

ix. 44. *Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*

Dr. Rymer supposes, that both the *worm* and the *fire* are allusions to the body, and refer to the two different ways of funeral among the ancients—interment and burying; so that our Lord may seem here to prevent an objection against the permanent misery

of the wicked in Hell, arising from the frail constitution of the body ; as if he should have said, the body will not then be as it is at present ; but will be incapable of consumption or dissolution : in its natural state the worms may devour the whole, and die for want of nourishment : the fire may consume it, and be extinguished for want of fuel ; but there shall be perpetual food for the worm that corrodes it, and perpetual fuel for the fire that torments it. The words of the apocryphal writer, in Judith xvi. 17, greatly illustrate this interpretation. *The Lord Almighty will take vengeance on the wicked in the day of judgment, putting fire and worms into their flesh, and they shall feel them and weep for ever.—Burder.*

NO. 476.—PRACTICE OF DIVORCING THE HUSBAND.

x. 12. *If a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.*

Josephus informs us, that this practice of divorcing the husband, unwarranted by the law, had been introduced by Salome, sister of Herod the Great; who sent a bill of divorce to her husband Costobarus; which bad example was afterwards followed by Herodias, and others. By law it was the husband's prerogative to dissolve the marriage. The wife could do nothing by herself. When he thought fit to dissolve it, her consent was not necessary. The bill of divorce which she received was to serve as evidence for her, that she had not deserted her husband, but was dismissed by him, and consequently free.—

Campbell.

NO. 477.—DESCRIPTION OF SACRED ANIMALS.

xi. 2. *Ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him and bring him.*

No animal was allowed to be employed in sacred uses, even among the Heathen, that had previously been used for any domestic or agricultural purpose; and those which had never been yoked, were considered as sacred.

The Delphic oracles thus answer give:

Behold among the fields a lonely cow,

Unworn with yokes, unbroken to the plough. OVID.

The Romans had the same religion with the Greeks; and, consequently, the same kind of sacrifices. So Virgil:—

from his herd he culs

For slaughter, four the fairest of his bulls;

Four heifers from his female stock he took,

All fair, and all unknowing of the yoke. DRYDEN.

It is very likely that the Gentiles learnt their first sacrificial rites from the Patriarchs: and on this account, we need not wonder to find so many coincidences in the sacrificial system of the Patriarchs and Jews, and all the neighbouring nations.—Clarke.

NO. 478.—BREAKING THE BOX OF ALABASTER.

xiv. 3. *As he sat at meat, there came a woman, having an alabaster-box of ointment of spikenard, very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head.*

Sir J. Chardin informs us, that the Persians transport their wine in bottles, whose mouths are stopped with cotton, upon which melted wax is poured, so as to exclude the air. Some of these bottles are made

of buck or goat-skins, and some of thick glass; and wickered, to prevent their breaking. If they applied wax to their wine bottles to exclude the air, no doubt can be entertained but that all the vessels which held their perfumes were treated after a similar manner.

Propertius calls the opening of a wine vessel by breaking the seal or cement that secured it, “breaking the vessel;” and this, no doubt, is the meaning of the text before us. To break the box to shivers would have been a piece of vain profusion; but if we understand it of breaking the cement with which it was stopped, it will appear perfectly natural. Horace supposes, that some of those *alabaster boxes* were very large. That which we read of in the gospel of St. John* is supposed to contain a pound weight. It was not common to apply so great a quantity to every guest; for, according to the language of our Lord, it was more suitable to a funeral unction than that of an ordinary entertainment.—*Harmer, and Burder.*

Calmet says, that *spikenard*, or *nard*, is an Indian plant, whose root is very small and slender: it puts forth a long and small stalk, and has several ears or spikes even with the ground, which has given it the name of spikenard: the taste is bitter, acrid, and aromatic; and the smell agreeable.

NO. 479.—FALLING UPON THE GROUND, A MARK OF DISTRESS.

xiv. 35. *He went forward a little, and fell on the ground.*

Amongst other circumstances by which the ancients

*Chap. xii. 3.

expressed the greatness of their distress, they frequently threw themselves down upon the ground, and rolled in the dust. Thus Homer introduces Priam lamenting the death of Hector:—

Permit me now, belov'd of Jove, to steep
My careful temples in the dew of sleep ;
For since the day that number'd with the dead
My hapless son, the dust has been my bed.

ILIA.D.

Thus also Ovid represents Æneus behaving himself upon the death of his son Meleager :—

His hoary head and furrowed checks besmears
With noisome dirt, and chides the tedious years.

Thus we find our Lord, when *exceeding sorrowful*, leaving his disciples, and expressing his agony in a way that was chiefly appropriated to scenes of peculiar distress.—*Burder*.

NO. 480.—DRESS OF THE PEOPLE OF EGYPT.

xiv. 51. *And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body.*

Pococke, in describing the dresses of the people of Egypt, says, “ it is almost a general custom, among the Arabs, and Mahomedan natives of the country, in cold weather, to wear a large blanket, either white or brown; and in summer, a blue and white cotton sheet, which the Christians in the country constantly use. They put one corner before, over the left shoulder, and bring it behind, under the right arm, and so over their bodies; throwing it behind, over the left shoulder, in order that the right arm may be left bare for action. When it is hot, and they are on horseback, they let it fall down on the saddle round them;

and about Faiume I particularly observed, that young people especially, and the poorer sort, had nothing on whatever but this blanket ; and it is probable, that the young man who followed our Saviour was clothed after the same manner ; for he had *a linen cloth cast about his naked body ; and when the young men laid hold on him, he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.*

NO. 481.—AN ATTRIBUTE EXPRESSIVE OF GOD.

xiv. 61. *The High-Priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the son of the Blessed?*

It is observable, that the peculiar attribute of Deity is here used to express the divine nature. Supreme happiness is properly considered as belonging to God : and as all comfort flows from him, suitable ascriptions of praise and glory are his due. But this form of speech was conformable to the ancient custom of the Jews, who, when the Priest in the sanctuary rehearsed the name of God, used to answer, “Blessed be his name for ever.” The title of the Blessed One, in their language, signified as much as the Holy One ; and both, or either of them, the God of Israel. Hence such expressions are very frequent in the Rabbins. See also Rom. i. 25.—2 Cor. xi. 31.—*Burder.*

NO. 482.—DESCRIPTION OF A MAN'S CRIME CARRIED BEFORE HIM TO EXECUTION.

xv. 26. *The Superscription of his accusation was written over, The King of the Jews.*

It was the custom of the Romans, to write the crime for which any man suffered death on a tablet, and carry it before him to his execution. Eusebius says, that Attalus the martyr was led round the

amphitheatre with a tablet before him, inscribed, “This is Attalus, the Christian.” So Domitian.—The man was cast to the dogs in the arena, to be devoured, with this inscription, “He spake impiously.” The same custom prevailed in crucifixions. Dio mentions a servant, or slave, who was carried to the cross with a writing declaring the cause of his death.—*Burder.*

LUKE.

NO. 483.—HAIR BAGS USED INSTEAD OF MANGERS.

L. 7. And wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger.

IT appears, that the Eastern horses are generally fed on barley, which they eat out of bags of hair-cloth, hung about their heads for that purpose. D'Arvieux informs us, that the Arab horses are fed after this manner out of bags. Thevenot says, that those bags are made of black goats'-hair; and that they use no manger for feeding their horses, either in Persia or in Turkey.

Sir J. Chardin supposes, that the *manger*, which we read of in our text, in which our Lord was laid in his infancy, meant one of those holes of stone, or good cement, which they have in the stables of their caravanserais, and which are large enough to receive a child. Dr. Russell says, “mangers, like those in England, the Eastern people have not; for they have no hay: but in their stables they have stone troughs, in which they lay the fodder. When they tie down their horses in the court-yard, they use sacks.” Dr. Clarke says, “the original word signifies, not only a

manger, but a stable also ; and in this sense alone, I am persuaded, it should be understood in the text.— She brought forth her first born son, and rolled him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in the stable."

NO. 484.—DESCRIPTION OF THE EASTERN CARAVAN-SERAIS.

ii. 7. *There was no room for them in the inn.*

Campbell says, that the caravanserais are generally applied to the accommodation of travellers. They are built at proper distances through the roads of the Turkish dominions. They are generally built of the most durable materials, have commonly one story above the ground floor, the lower of which is arched, and serves for warehouses to store goods, for lodgings, and for stables, while the upper is used merely for lodgings. In Aleppo, the caravanserais are almost exclusively occupied by merchants, to whom they are rented like other houses.

Antes informs us, that travellers in the Turkish provinces not only carry all sorts of provisions along with them, but even the utensils necessary to dress them, and a tent for occasional shelter. The caravanserais, he says, are nothing but bare rooms, and those often very bad, and infested with all sorts of vermin. Volney says, that these houses are always without the precincts of towns, and consist of four wings, round a square court, which serves by way of inclosure for the beasts of burthen. The keeper of the kah gives the traveller the key and a mat; and he provides himself with the rest. The baggage of a man who wishes to be completely provided, consists in a carpet, a mattress, a blanket, two saucepans, two

dishes, two plates, and a coffee-pot, all of copper, well tinned ; a wooden box for salt and pepper ; a round leathern table ; small leathern bottles or bags for oil, butter, water, and brandy ; a tinder-box ; a cup of cocoa-nut ; some rice, dried raisins, dates, cyprus cheese, and coffee-berries, with a roaster and wooden mortar to pound them.

Tavernier says, that in those caravanserais there are lodgings for every man by himself. These lodgings are raised all along the court, two or three steps high, just behind which are the stables, where many times it is as good lying as in the chambers. Right against the head of every horse there is a nich, with a window into the lodging chamber, out of which every man may see that his horse is looked after.

Whoe'er has travell'd life's dull round,
Where'er his stages may have been,
May sigh to think he still has found
The warmest welcome at an inn.

SHENSTONE.

NO. 485.—MESSIAH, CALLED THE CONSOLATION.

ii. 25. Waiting for the Consolation of Israel.

The Jews used often to style the expected Messiah, *the Consolation*; and, "May I never see the consolation" was a common form of swearing among them. It was much used by R. Simeon Ben Shetach, who lived before the time of Christ.—*Gill.*

It is very observable, that the Prophets ordinarily comforted the people of God amongst the Jews, against all the sad tidings they brought them, with the prophecies of the coming, and kingdom, of Christ.* Herein old Simeon shewed the truth of his piety and devotion, that he believed, and waited for, the coming

* Isaiah lxvi. 13.—Jer. xxxi, 13.—Zech. i. 17.

of Christ: he had a true notion of the promised Messiah: he believed that he would come; and he waited for his coming.—*Pool.*

NO. 486.—THE PLACE OF OUR LORD'S TEMPTATION.

iv. 1, 2. *And was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the Devil.*

Mr. Maundrell, in his travels in the Holy Land, saw the place which was the scene of Christ's temptations; and thus describes it:—“From this place (the fountain of the apostles) you proceed in an intricate way amongst hills and valleys interchangeably, all of a very barren aspect at present, but discovering evident signs of the labor of the husbandman in ancient times. After some hours' travel in this sort of road, you arrive at the mountainous desert into which our blessed Saviour was led by the Spirit to be tempted of the Devil. A most miserable, dry, barren place it is; consisting of high rocky mountains, so torn and disordered as if the earth had suffered some great convulsion, in which its very bowels had been turned outward.”—*Burder.*

NO. 487—POSITION OF READING AND PREACHING
AMONG THE JEWS.

iv. 20. *He closed the book, and he gave it again to the Minister, and sat down.*

The Jewish Doctors, to shew their reverence for the scriptures, always stood when they read them; but when they taught the people they *sat down*. Thus we find our Lord sitting down in the synagogue to preach, after he had read the passage in the Prophet which he made the subject of his discourse.

This was in the synagogue of Nazareth, of which he was a member, having been brought up in that city. When he was set down in the desk, or pulpit, it is said, that *the eyes of all that were present were fastened upon him*; as they perceived by his posture, that he was going to preach to them.

Macknight supposes, that the custom of preaching from a text of scripture, which now prevails throughout all the Christian churches, derived its origin from the authority of our Lord's example.—*Burder.*

NO. 488.—THE TERM BOSOM ILLUSTRATED.

vi. 38. *Good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom.*

Almost all ancient nations, and particularly those of the East, wore long, wide, and loose garments; and when about to carry any thing away that their hands could not contain, they used a fold in the bosom of their robe, nearly in the same way that the women in England use their aprons; and to this custom our Lord is supposed to allude: The following example from Herodotus will illustrate the term, and shew the ridiculous nature of covetousness:—

“When Crœsus had promised to Alcmeon as much as he could carry about his body at once, in order to improve the King’s liberality, he put on a very wide tunic, leaving a great space in the bosom, and drew on the widest buskins he could prepare. Being conducted into the treasury, he sat down upon a great heap of ingots, and having first stuffed the buskins round his legs with as much gold as they could contain, he afterwards filled his whole bosom and loaded

his hair with ingots; then he filled his mouth, and waddled out of the treasury, having scarcely any thing remaining in his appearance indicative of the human form?"—*Harter.*

The miser grinn'd whilst avarice was drawn,
Nor thought the faithful likeness was his own;
His own dear self no imag'd fool could find,
But saw a thousand other fops design'd.

BOILEAU.

NO. 489.—VIOLENT INUNDATIONS FREQUENT IN THE EAST.

vi. 48. *When the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house.*

Jacobus de Vitriaco says, "the returns of rain in the winter are not very frequent; yet when it does rain, the water pours down with great violence three or four days and nights together, enough to drown the whole country." Such violent rains, in so hilly a country as Judea, must occasion inundations very dangerous to buildings within their reach, by washing the soil from under them, and occasioning their fall.

Dr. Russell says, that these violent rains often wash down stone walls at Aleppo: and a remarkable instance happened in the Castravan mountains, of a hamlet, with a fig-garden, &c. being removed suddenly to a great distance. Maundrell says, he witnessed the tracks of several torrents down the sides of the hills of the Holy Land. He describes the country as extremely rocky, covered with a thin coat of earth. These circumstances illustrate the allusion of our Lord; and teach us how to understand building on the sand or loose soil; and the wise man digging

down to the rock, before he laid the foundation of his building.—*Harmer.*

NO. 490.—HAIR OF THE HEAD USED FOR A CLOTH.

vii. 44, 45, 46. *I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss; but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. Mine head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.*

It was an universal custom among the Eastern people, to treat their guests, at their entrance into their houses, with *water to wash their feet*; which compliment, it appears, the Pharisees neglected: but this the female penitent supplied. Polybius tells us, that when Hannibal drew near to Rome, the Roman ladies went to the temples to supplicate the gods, washing the floors of the temples with their hair: which, he adds, was the common custom, on such occasions, to do.

It appears from different writers, that kissing the *feet* was no unusual practice among the Jews; and was used also by the Greeks and Romans among their civilities and in their salutations. By the contrast which our Lord draws between this woman's conduct and that of the Pharisee, he did not look for his kissing his feet, but for some other salutation, perhaps the kissing of the hand, which was a mark of reverence.

It was a compliment also among the Easterns to *anoint* the heads of their guests with sweet oil: Thus also Homer represents Telemachus and Pisistratus as

being entertained at the court of Menelaus. After their introduction to the palace, he says,

From room to room their eager view they bend ;
Hence to the bath, a beauteous pile, descend :
Where a bright damsel-train attend the guests,
With liquid odours, and embroider'd vests.

Burder.

NO. 491.—TEDIOUSNESS OF EASTERN SALUTATION.

x. 4. *Salute no man by the way.*

The mission upon which the disciples of Christ were sent, was so important, that they were required to use the greatest dispatch, and, of course, to avoid all such unnecessary and tedious ceremonies as were calculated most seriously to retard their progress. Christ would not command his disciples needlessly to violate any of those customs which were in general use, and which were innocent in themselves; but had they been allowed to give and receive all the common salutations of the day, their ministerial progress might have been greatly interrupted.

Among the Egyptians, the ordinary way of salutation at a distance, is by bringing the hand down to the knees and then carrying it to the stomach; they then take each other by the hand; and the country people reciprocally clap each others hand very smartly, twenty or thirty times together, at meeting, without saying any thing more than, "How do you do? I wish you good health." After this first compliment, many other friendly questions are asked about the health of the family, &c.

Horneman, in his travels in Africa, speaks of a young man of Fezzan, who, accosting an Arab of

Augila, he detained him a considerable time with his civilities: when the Arab being obliged to advance with greater speed to come up again with his companions, the youth of Fezzan thought he should appear deficient in good manners if he quitted him so soon. For near half a mile he kept running by his horse; whilst all his conversation was, “ How dost thou fare ? Well, how art thou thyself ? Praised be God, thou art arrived in peace ! God grant thee peace ! How dost thou do ? ” &c. This shews us the tediousness of Eastern compliments : it casts light upon the language of Elisha to Gehazi—2 Kings, iv. 29 ; and elucidates the orders of our Lord to the seventy in the text before us. It is as if he had said, “ Do not loiter and gossip with any whom you may accidentally meet with on your journey ; but make all proper speed to the towns whither I have sent you, and there deliver your good tidings.—*Calmet*; &c.

NO. 492.—SITTING IN SACKCLOTH AND ASHES.

x. 13. *Sitting in sackcloth and ashes.*

This expression of mourning and sorrow was frequent in the East. Thus Tamar signified her distress, when dishonored by Amnon—2 Sam. xiii. 19. Thus when Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes.—Esther iv. 1. Thus Job expressed his repentance.—Job xlvi. 6. Thus Daniel set his face *unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth and ashes.*—Deut. ix. 3. Other nations adopted the practice ; and it became a very common method, whereby to exhibit great grief and misery. That it prevailed among the Greeks is also certain.

Homer thus represents Achilles acting upon the news of the death of Patroclus :—

A sudden horror shot through all the Chief,
And wrapt his senses in a cloud of grief ;
Cast on the ground, with furious hands he spread
The scorching ashes o'er his graceful head :
His purple garments, and his golden hairs,
Those he deforms with dust, and these he tears :
On the hard soil his groaning breast he threw,
And roll'd and grovell'd as to earth he grew.

ILIA.D.

Burder.

NO. 493.—MANNER OF GIRDING UP THE LOINS.

xii. 35. *Let your loins be girded about.*

They who travel on foot, are obliged to fasten their garments at a greater height from their feet than they do at other times. This is what is understood by girding up the loins. Chardin says, that such as travel on foot “ always gather up their vest ; by which they walk more commodiously, having the leg and knee unburthened and disengaged by the vest, which they are not when that hangs over them.” After this manner he supposes the Israelites were prepared for their going out of Egypt, when they ate the first passover.—Exod. xii. 11.—Harmer.

It appears that their long garments were tucked up in their belts ; and hence the admonition of St. Peter —*gird up the loins of your mind ; be sober, and hope to the end*—1 Peter, i. 13.

NO. 494.—SOUTH WIND THE FORE-RUNNER OF HEAT.

xii. 55. *When ye see the south wind blow, ye say, there will be heat ; and it cometh to pass.*

This circumstance accords perfectly with the rela-

tions of travellers into Syria, Egypt, and several parts of the East. When the *south wind* begins to blow, the sky becomes dark and heavy, the air grey and thick, and the whole atmosphere assumes a most alarming aspect. The heat produced by these southern winds has been compared to that of a large oven at the moment of drawing out the bread ; and to that of a flame blown upon the face of a person standing near the fire which excites it.—*Burder.*

Egmont and Hayman tell us, that the heat proved fatal to several people in the army of King Baldwin IV. upon fighting a battle not far from Tiberias in Galilee ; and Gesta Dei says, that the heat at that time was so unusually great, that as many died, in both armies, by the heat as by the sword.

When in the sultry glebe I faint,
Or on the thirsty mountain pant ;
To fertile vales and dewy meads
My weary, wand'ring steps he leads ;
Where peaceful rivers, soft and slow,
Amid the verdant landscape flow.

NO. 495.—DESCRIPTION OF CHINESE CEREMONY.

xiv. 16, 17. *A certain man made a great supper, and bade many : and sent his servant at supper-time, to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready.*

There is a striking conformity between the circumstances intimated in the introductory part of this parable, and the ceremonies attendant upon a Chinese entertainment. Amongst this people, an invitation to an entertainment is not supposed to be given with sincerity, until it has been renewed three or four times in writing. A card is sent in the evening before the

entertainment; another in the morning of the appointed day; and a third when every thing is prepared.—*Goldsmith.*

The invitation to this great supper is supposed to have been given as soon as the person had resolved upon making it: but it is again repeated at supper-time when all things were ready. Now as it doth not appear that the renewal of it arose from the refusal of the persons invited, of which no hint is given, we may suppose it was customary thus to send repeated messages. The practice was very ancient amongst the Chinese; and if admitted to have prevailed amongst the Jews, certainly gives a signification to the words, not usually perceived.—*Burder.*

NO. 496.—TOWERS, A PLACE OF REFUGE IN DANGER.

xiv. 28. *Which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost.*

William of Tyre says, that in the reign of Baldwin II. when the strength of the kingdom was collected together at the siege of Tyre, the people of Ascalon suddenly invaded the country about Jerusalem, and put to the sword the greatest part of the inhabitants of a town called Mahomeria: but the old men, the women, and the children, escaped by betaking themselves to a *tower*.

The Easterns have not only towers in their vineyards as they had of old,* but they have them in their gardens also. Marcus Sanutus tells us, that the inhabitants of Ptolemais beat down the towers of their gardens to the ground, upon the approach of the Tartars in one thousand two hundred and sixty;

* *Isaiah v. 2.—Matt. xxi, 33.*

and Maundrell mentions these edifices, in his account of the gardens of Damascus.

We can hardly think that our Lord is speaking of the unexpensive buildings in a vineyard, which are sometimes so slight as to consist only of four poles, with a floor on the top of them, to which they ascend by a ladder; but rather of those elegant turrets, erected in gardens, where the Eastern people of fortune spend a considerable part of their time. These towers are not designed for strength, but pomp, and perhaps convenience and pleasure. Nor do those other towers, designed for safety in times of danger, seem to have been very strong; but rather intended for a short defence; in those unquiet times, when enemies made sudden irruptions into the country, and as suddenly retreated. Thus Gideon appears, without much difficulty, to have demolished the tower of Penuel.—*Judges viii. 9, 17.—Harmer.*

NO. 497.—HUSKS USED FOR FEEDING SWINE.

xv. 16. *The husks that the swine did eat.*

It is evident that the original word signifies a *husk*, or pod, wherein the seeds of some plants, especially those of the leguminous tribe, are contained. Both the Greek and Latin terms signify the fruit of the carot-tree, a tree very common in the Levant, and in the southern parts of Europe, as Spain and Italy. This fruit still continues to be used for the same purpose, the feeding of swine. It is also called St. John's bread, from an opinion that the Baptist used it in the wilderness. Miller says, it is mealy, and has a sweetish taste, and that it is eaten by the poorer sort; for it grows in the common hedges, and is of little account.

Campbell.

To feed *swine* was the vilest of all employments ; and to a Jew peculiarly degrading. Shame, contempt, and disgrace are wedded to sin, and can never be divorced. No character could be meaner in the sight of a Jew than that of a swine-herd : and Herodotus informs us, that in Egypt they were not permitted to mingle with civil society, nor to appear in the worship of the gods ; nor would the very dregs of the people have any matrimonial connexion with them.—*Clarke.*

NO. 498.—MUSIC USED IN EASTERN FEASTS.

xv. 25. *As he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing.*

There can be no doubt that *music* frequently accompanied Eastern meals, especially those which were of a superior kind. Homer thus represents Ulysses' meal :—

Long as the bard
Chanted, he ate ; and when he ceas'd to eat,
Then also ceas'd the bard divine to sing.

Isaiah speaks of the *tabret*, or *timbrel*, as used in their feasts along with wine.—Chap. v. 12. Chardin says, that the Eastern women seldom make use of any other instrument than the Aleppine *diff*, which appears to correspond with the timbrel. Dr. Russell says, that the *diff* is a hoop, sometimes with pieces of brass fixed in it, to make a jingling, and covered with a piece of parchment. It is beaten with the fingers, and is the true tympanum of the ancients : as appears from its figure in several relievos. Russell, speaking of the music of Aleppo, says, that it consists of a sort of hautboy, trumpets, cymbals, and large drums.—*Burder, and Harmer.*

NO. 499.—SERVANTS RECEIVE A TENTH OF THEIR MASTERS' PROFITS.

xvi. 12. *If ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?*

Aaron Hill informs us, that among the Turks, it is a common custom for the merchants, on hiring a confidential servant, to agree that he shall claim no wages; but to make amends for this, they have a privileged advantage of ten per cent. upon the master's profits. This kind of allowance, though extremely singular, is both ancient and general in the East. It is mentioned in the Gentoo laws.—“ If a man hath hired any person to conduct a trade for him, and no agreement be made with regard to wages, in that case, the person hired shall receive one-tenth of the profit. If such a person attends ten milch cows, he shall select for his own use the milk of that cow which produces the most; if he attends more cows, he shall take milk after the same rate, in lieu of wages. If a person attends one hundred cows for the space of one year, without any appointment of wages, he shall take to himself one heifer of three years old; and also, of all those cows which produce milk, whatever the quantity may be, after every eight days, he shall take to himself the milk; the entire product of one day.” According to these extracts, the meaning of the text must be, “ If you have not been found faithful in the administration of your principal's property, how can you expect to receive your share of that advantage which should have rewarded you for your labors?—

Calmet, &c.

NO. 500.—BEGGARS TAKE THEIR POST AT GATES.

xvi. 20. *There was a certain beggar named Lazarus which was laid at his gate, full of sores.*

The gate was the place where beggars stood, or were laid, and asked alms: hence that rule with the Jews, “If a man die and leave sons and daughters, if he leave but a small substance, the daughters shall be taken care of, and the sons shall beg at the gates.”—

Gill.

Lazarus signifies, the help or assistance of God;—a name properly given to a man, who was both poor and afflicted, and had no help but that which came from Heaven.—Clarke.

NO. 501.—POSTURE USED BY THE JEWS AT TABLE.

xvi. 22. *It came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.*

This expression alludes to the posture used by the Jews at table; which was reclining on couches, after the manner of the Romans; the upper part of the body resting upon the left elbow, and the lower lying at length upon the couch. When two or three reclined on the same couch, some say the worthiest or most honourable person lay first: Lightfoot says, in the middle, the next in dignity lay with his head reclining on the breast or bosom of the first, as John is said to have done on the bosom of Jesus at supper—John xiii. 23; and hence is borrowed the phrase of *Abraham's bosom*, as denoting the state of celestial happiness. Abraham being esteemed the most honorable person, and the father of the Jewish nation, to be in his bosom signifies, in allusion to the order in which guests

were placed at an entertainment, the highest state of felicity next to that of Abraham himself.—*Burder.*

The place for sitting is a sort of sofa called a duan. It is about eighteen inches high—three or four feet broad—covered with a carpet, having cushions or bolsters against the wall, upon which the person sitting reclines. The back of the duan is about the height of the arms; and hence we read of sewing *pillows to all arm-holes*—Ezek. xiii. 18: not that the cushions were confined to the arm-holes; but they were made soft, and nicely adapted to all leaning arms, so as to produce the most voluptuous effect.—*Harmer.*

NO. 502.—TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM, WITH ITS DECORATION,

xxi. 5. Some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts.

Josephus says, that the stones of which the temple was built were fifty feet long; twenty-four broad, and sixteen in thickness. The marble was so white, that at a distance it appeared like a mountain of snow.

Tacitus, speaking of the immense opulence of the temple of Jerusalem, amongst other things, mentions a golden table given by Pompey, and several golden vines of exquisite workmanship, as well as of immense size. Josephus tells us, that these vines had clusters, as tall as a man, which some of them thought referred to God's representing the Jewish nation under the emblem of a vine.—Isa. v. 1, 7. If these accounts be true, well might the disciples be struck with wonder at such a superb edifice, and such splendid ornaments.—*Doddridge, &c.*

NO. 503.—THE SPORT OF BLINDFOLDING.

xxii. 64. *When they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophesy, who is it that smote thee?*

This usage of Christ refers to that sport so ordinary among children,—in which it is the manner first to blindfold, then to strike, then to ask who gave the blow, and not to let him go until he had named the right person who had struck him. It was used on this occasion to reproach our blessed Lord, and expose him to ridicule.—*Hammond.*

NO. 504.—FORM OF BLESSING THE PEOPLE.

xxiv. 50. *And he led them out as far as to Bethany : and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.*

The form of blessing the people used by Aaron and his sons is recorded, Numb. vi. 23, 27. Though our Lord might not use the same form in blessing his disciples, yet in doing it, *he lifted up his hands* as they did.—See Lev. ix. 22. Maimonides says, “the Priests go up into the desk, after they have finished the morning daily service, and lift up their hands above, over their heads, except the High-Priest, who does not lift up his hands above the plate of gold which is upon his forehead.”—*Gill.*

See! he lifts his hands above!

See! he shows the prints of love!

Hark! his gracious lips bestow

Blessings on his church below!

BRACKENBURY.

NO. 505.—DESCRIPTION OF EASTERN ADOPTION.

i. 12. *To them gave he power to become the sons of God.*

IT appears, that adoption was very generally practised in the East. It is therefore frequently alluded to in the scriptures. If a person who was never married adopted a son, that son being married, his children would become the children of his adopter, bear his name, and inherit his estate. Sir W. Jones says, that in Athens an adopted son could not himself adopt another : he must either leave a legitimate son, or the estate he received from his adopting father must revert to his adopting father's natural heirs. There cannot be two adopted sons at the same time. The adopted son, and the after-born sons, to the person who adopted him, were by law the coheirs of the estate ; but no adoption by a man who had legitimate sons then born, was considered to be valid. Reader, art thou adopted into the family of God ?—*Burder, &c.*

NO. 506.—NAMES FREQUENTLY CHANGED IN THE EAST.

i. 42. *When Jesus beheld him, he said, thou art Simon, the son of Jona : thou shalt be called Cephas.*

Chardin says, that the Easterns frequently change their names, as they change in point of age, condition, or religion. Thus the King of Babylon gave the name of Zedekiah to Mattaniah, King of Judah—2 Kings xxiv.17 ; and gave new names to Daniel and his companions—Dan. i. 7. The example of the King of Persia, in 1667, is yet more remarkable. The first year of the reign of this Prince having been unhappy, on account of wars and famine in many provinces, his counsellors persuaded him that the name which he

had borne was fatal, and that the fortune of the empire would not be changed until he had changed his name. This was done; the Prince was crowned again under the name of Soliman; all the seals, all the coins that had the name of Sefi, were broken, the same as if the King had been dead, and another had taken possession. The women more frequently change their names than the men: their beauty, gaiety, agility in dancing, or their fine voice, being quickly lost, either by accident or by age, they assume other names more correspondent with their state.

It appears, that some of the persons whose names were thus changed, were invariably called by their new names. Thus Abraham was always so called in the latter part of his life, and never Abram; and his wife, in like manner, Sarah, and not Sarai. Others might be called, sometimes by the one, sometimes by the other, and sometimes by both joined together. So St. John tells us, that Jesus gave the new name of Peter to the brother of Andrew; yet he represents Jesus afterwards calling him Simon; and John himself sometimes called him Peter, and sometimes Simon Peter.—*Harmer.*

NO. 507.—CORONATION OF EASTERN KINGS.

i. 49. *Thou art the King of Israel.*

Mr. Bruce has given us an account of a coronation, which exhibits a conformity between the manners of Abyssinia and Judea. He says, it was on the 18th of March,* that this festival began. The King's army

*This, according to the Abyssinian account, was the day of our Saviour's first coming to Jerusalem.

consisted of 30,000 men. All the great officers, all the officers of state and the court, then present, were every one dressed in the richest and gayest manner ; nor was the other sex behind hand in the splendor of their appearance. The King, dressed in crimson damask, with a great chain of gold round his neck, his head bare, mounted upon a horse, richly caparisoned, advanced at the head of his nobility, passed the outer court, and came to the paved way before the church ; here he was met by a number of young girls, daughters of the supreme Judges, together with many noble virgins, standing on the right and left of the court.

Two of the noblest of these, held in their hands a crimson cord of silk, somewhat thicker than a common whip-cord, stretched across from one company to another, as if to shut up the road by which the King was approaching the church. When this cord was drawn about breast high by the girls, the King entered, advancing at a moderate pace, curveting and shewing the management of his horse. He was stopped by this string, whilst the damsels on each side asking who he was, were answered, "I am your King, the King of Ethiopia :" to which they replied with one voice, " You shall not pass, you are not our King."

The King then retires some paces and presents himself afresh, when the cord is again drawn by the young women, and the question repeated, " Who are you ? " The King answered, " I am your King, the King of Israel ; " the damsels resolved, even on this second attack, not to surrender, but upon their own terms ; they again answer, " You shall not pass, you are not our King."

The third time, after retiring, the King advances, with a face and air more determined, and the virgins again presenting the cord and asking who he is, he answers, "I am your King, the King of Sion;" and drawing his sword, cuts the silk cord asunder: immediately upon this, the young women say, "It is a truth, you are our King, you are the King of Sion"; upon which they begin to sing Hallelujah, and in this they are joined by the court and army upon the plain; firearms are discharged, drums and trumpets sound, and the King, amidst these acclamations and rejoicings, advances to the foot of the stairs of the church, where he dismounts and sits down upon a stone, which by its remains, was, apparently, an altar of Anubis, or the dog-star.

The King is first anointed, then crowned, and is accompanied half way up the steps by the Priests, chaunting psalms and hymns: here he stops at an hole, made for the purpose, in one of the steps, and is fumigated with incense and myrrh, aloes and cassia. Divine service is then celebrated, and after receiving the sacrament, he returns to the camp, where many days are spent in feasting and rejoicing,—See Psalm xxiv, and xlvi.—*Burder.*

NO. 508.—EASTERN FEASTS CONDUCTED BY A GOVERNOR.
ii. 8. *Draw out now, and bear unto the Governor of
the feast.*

The master or intendant of a marriage-feast was the husband's friend, and charged with the order of the feast. He gave directions to the servants, had an eye over every thing, commanded the tables to be covered, or to be cleared of the dishes, as he

thought proper ; from whence he had his name as regulator of the *triclinium*, or festive board : he also tasted the wine and distributed it to the guests. The author of *Ecclesiasticus* thus describes the office of Master of the feast :— “ If thou be made the Master of a feast, lift not thyself up, but be among them as one of the rest ; take diligent care of them, and so sit down : and when thou hast done all thine office, take thy place, that thou mayest be merry with them, and receive a crown for the well ordering of the feast.” On this passage of St. John, Theophylact remarks, in order that no one might suspect that their taste was vitiated by having drank to excess, so as not to know water from wine, our Saviour orders it to be first carried to the *Governor of the feast* ; for those who are intrusted with this office observe the strictest sobriety, that they may be able properly to regulate the whole. This Governor ordered how much each guest should drink ; and all the company were obliged to obey. Horace insinuates that the Governor was chosen by throwing dice, upon the sides of which were engraven or painted the images of Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Apollo, Venus, and Diana : he who threw up Venus was made the King, or Governor, of the feast.—*Burder.*

NO. 509.—WINE PRESERVED FOR MARRIAGE-FEASTS.

ii. 10. *Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine.*

The Abbe Mariti, speaking of the age of the wines of Cyprus, says, “ the oldest wines used in commerce doth not exceed eight or ten years. It is not true, as has been reported, that there is some of

it an hundred years old: but it is certain that at the birth of a son or of a daughter, the father causes a jar filled with wine to be buried in the earth, having first taken the precaution to seal it hermetically: in this manner it may be kept 'till these children marry. It is then placed on the table before the bride and bridegroom, and is distributed among their relations and the other guests invited to the wedding." If such a custom prevailed formerly, it throws great significancy into the assertion of *good wine* being first brought out upon such an occasion; and if this supposition be admitted, it tends to increase the greatness of the miracle,—that notwithstanding what had been drank at first was peculiarly excellent, yet that which Christ by his divine power produced as an after supply, was found to be of a superior quality.

Burder.

Now the former wonder show,
Manifest thy pow'r below;
Earthly souls exalt, refine,
Turn the water into wine.

BRACKENBURY.

NO. 510.—WISE MEN COMPARED TO LIGHT.

v. 35. *He was a burning and a shining light.*

This character of John the Baptist is perfectly conformable to the mode of expression adopted by the Jews. It was usual with them to call any person celebrated for knowledge, a candle: thus they say, that Shuah, the father-in-law of Judah, mentioned Gen. xxxviii. 2, was the candle or light of the place where he lived; because he was one of the most famous men in the city, enlightening their eyes: hence they call a Rabbin, the candle of the law, and the lamp of light.—*Lightfoot.*

A lighted candle is a very proper emblem of a Minister of God.

“In serving others, I myself destroy.”

All the collective light of the moral world is derived from Jesus Christ, who is *the Sun of Righteousness*.—

Clarke.

NO. 511.—THANKSGIVING COMMON AT MEALS.

vi. 11. *And Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples.*

Gratitude to God for the common blessings of providence is the duty of all who enjoy them, and is very properly expressed by giving thanks on their reception. Such a practice we find to have prevailed both amongst Heathens, Jews, and Christians.

That it prevailed amongst the Heathens is certain from the following testimonies:—Atheneus quotes Hermeias, who mentions a people in Egypt whose custom it was, on certain occasions, after they had placed themselves in the usual posture of eating at the table, to rise again and kneel; the Priest then chaunted a grace; after which they partook of their food in a solemn sacrificial manner. Livy speaks of it as a settled custom amongst the old Romans, that, they offered sacrifice and prayer to the gods at their meals. Quintilian says, “we approached the table, and then invoked the gods.”

As to the behaviour of the Jews, Josephus, speaking of the Essenes, says, that the Priest begs a blessing, before they presume to take any nourishment; and when the meal is over, the Priest prays again; and the company with him bless and praise God, as their

preserver, and the donor of their life and nourishment. The Jews had their hymns and psalms of thanksgiving, not only after eating their passover, but on a variety of other occasions,—at and after meals; as when the best of their wine was brought upon the table, or the fruit of the garden. Thus when Christ supped with the two disciples at Emmaus, *he took bread and blessed it.*—Luke xxiv. 30. And after he had eaten the passover himself, the disciples sung an hymn.—Matt. xxvi. 30.

The primitive Christians appear universally to have observed the custom of thanksgiving. We read that St. Paul, when he had spoken, *took bread, and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all, and when he had broken it, began to eat.*—Acts xxvii. 35. In the days immediately following the apostles, we trace this practice in the writing of the fathers, particularly in the Clementine constitutions, in Chrysostom, and Origen.—*Burder.*

Let us never be ashamed to look up to Heaven and acknowledge God as the unbounded source of universal good.

NO. 512.—SEALING VICTIMS FOR SACRIFICE.

vi. 27. *Him hath God the Father sealed.*

Most Christians believe that our blessed Lord laid down his life as an atonement for the sin of the world: and to this he seems to allude, ver. 51—*the bread that I will give, is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world;* and to this circumstance the saying above seems evidently to refer. It certainly was a custom among nations contiguous to Judea, to set a seal upon the victim that was deemed proper for sacrifice. The following account of the methods of

providing white bulls among the Egyptians, for sacrifices to the god Apis, will cast some light on this subject. Herodotus says, that if they find one black hair on him, they deem him unclean. The Priest examines the animal both standing up and lying down ; afterwards he draws out his tongue, to see by certain signs whether it be clean ; and if the animal be found without blemish, he signifies it by binding a label to his horns ; then applying wax, seals it with his ring, and the beast is led away. To sacrifice an unsealed beast is punished with death.

The Jews could not be unacquainted with the rites and ceremonies of the Egyptian worship ; and it is possible, that such precautions as these were in use among themselves ; as they were strictly enjoined to have their sacrifices “without spot, and without blemish.” God, infinite in holiness and justice, found Jesus Christ to be a lamb *without spot* or imperfection, and therefore sealed him ; pointed out and accepted him as a proper sacrifice for the sins of mankind. Collate this passage with Heb. vii. 26, 27, 28,—Eph. v. 27,—2 Peter iii. 14, and Heb. ix. 13, 14. *If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*—Harmer.

NO. 513.—THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

vii. 37. *In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.*

The last day grew into high esteem with the

nation, because on the preceding seven days* they held that sacrifices were offered, not so much for themselves, as for the whole world. They offered, in the course of them, seventy bullocks, for the seventy nations of the world; but the eighth was wholly on their own behalf. At the passover, the Jews offered an omer, to obtain from God his blessing on their harvest: at pentecost, their first fruits, to request his blessing on the fruits of the trees; and in the feast of tabernacles they offered water to God, partly referring to the water from the rock in the wilderness, 1 Cor. x. 4, but chiefly to solicit the blessing of rain on the approaching seed-time. These waters they drew out of Siloah, and brought them into the temple at the sound of the trumpet and great rejoicing.—

Lightfoot.

Our Lord, according to his general custom, embraces the occasion of their offering water at this feast, to summon them to himself as the living fountain.—*If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.*

If any man thirst, and happy would be,
The vilest and worst may come unto me;
May drink of my spirit, excepted is none,
Lay claim to my merit, and take for his own.

NO. 514.—JESUS CHRIST THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

viii. 12. *I am the light of the world;*

The fountain whence all intellectual light and spiritual understanding proceed: without me all is darkness, misery, and death. The Divine Being was by the Rabbins denominated, *the light of the world.*

* Lev. xxiii. 34.

So in Bamidbar Rabba,—“the Israelites said to God, ‘O Lord of the universe, thou commandest us to light lamps to thee, yet thou art the light of the world, and with thee the light dwelleth.’” Our Lord therefore assumes here a well known character of the Supreme Being; and with this we find the Jews were greatly offended.

Some suppose our Lord alludes to the custom of lighting lamps, or torches, on the first day of the feast of tabernacles: but as these words seem to have been spoken the day after that last and great day of the feast, mentioned chap. vii. 37, they may rather be considered as referring to the following custom:—the Jews added a ninth day to this feast; which day they termed, the feast of joy for the law; and on that day they were accustomed to take all the sacred books out of the chest where they had been deposited, and put a lighted candle in their place, in allusion to Prov. vi. 23.—*For the commandment is a lamp (or candle): the law is light.* Or to Psalm cxix. 115.—*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.* If this custom existed in the time of our Lord, it is most likely that it is to it he here alludes, as it must have happened about the same time in which these words were spoken.

The sun, the fountain of light, is also the fountain of life: by his vivifying influences all things live; neither animal nor vegetative life could exist, were it not for his influence. Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness, Mal. iv. 2, is the fountain of all spiritual and eternal life: his light brings life with it, and they who walk in his light, live in his life. This sentiment is beautifully expressed and illustrated in the following

inimitable verse of that second Spencer, Phineas Fletcher: speaking of the conversion of a soul to God, he says,

New light new love, new love new life hath bred ;
 A life that lives by love, and loves by light :
 A love to him, to whom all loves are wed ;
 A light, to whom the sun is darkest night :
 Eye's light, heart's love, soul's only life he is :
 Life, soul, love, heart, light, eye, and all are his.

Clarke.

NO. 515.—DESCRIPTION OF THE TREASURY.

viii. 20. *These words spake Jesus in the treasury.*

Lightfoot says, that the treasury was in what was called the court of the women; that there were thirteen chests in it: in the thirteenth only, the women were permitted to put their offerings. Probably the other twelve were placed there in reference to the twelve tribes; each, perhaps, inscribed with the name of one of Jacob's twelve sons.

These chests were for receiving the voluntary contributions of the people towards defraying the charges of public worship; such as providing the public sacrifices, wood for the altar, salt, and other necessaries. That part of the area where these chests were placed was the treasury.—Mark xii. 41. Perhaps the whole court, or at least the piazza on one side, with the chambers over it, in which the sacred stores were kept, was from hence called by the same name.—*Jennings.*

NO. 516.—EASTERN MANNER OF LEADING SHEEP.

x. 4. *When he putteth forth his own sheep he goeth*

before them, and the sheep follow him; for they know his voice.

Polybius, in his twelfth book, tells us, that the flocks in the island of Cyrnon, upon the landing of any strangers, in order to lay hold of them, immediately run away: but that when the shepherd, upon observing the attempt, stoutly blows the horn, they immediately scamper towards it. Nor, says he, is it at all wonderful that they should be thus compliant with the sound; since, in Italy the keepers of swine do not observe the custom of Greece in following their herd; but going before them, to some distance, they sound their horn, and the herd immediately follow them, flocking to the sound: and so accustomed are they to their own horn, as to excite no little astonishment at the first hearing of it.—*Bulkley.*

A true pastor not only preaches, but he lives, the truth of the gospel: he enters into the depths of the salvation of God; and having thus explored the path, he knows how to lead those who are entrusted to his care into the fulness of the blessings of the gospel of peace. He who does not endeavor to realize in his own soul the truths which he preaches to others, will soon be as salt without its savour.—*Clarke.*

NO. 517.—SHEPHERDS KNOW THEIR SHEEP.

x. 14. *I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep; and am known of mine.*

I know them that are mine: I know their hearts, their wishes, their purposes, their circumstances, and I approve of them; for in this sense the word to know is often taken in the scriptures. Homer represents the

goat-herds as being so well acquainted with their own, though mixed with others, as easily to distinguish them.

As goat-herds separate their num'rous flocks
With ease, though fed promiscuous.

They know me as their father, protector, and saviour : they acknowledge me and my truth before the world ; and they approve of me, my word, my ordinances, and my people ; and manifest this by their attachment to me, and their zeal for my glory.—

Clarke.

NO. 518.—DIVISION OF THE DAY.

xi. 9. *Are there not twelve hours in the day?*

The division of time with the Jews was purely arbitrary. Formerly, the Hebrews and Greeks divided the day only according to the three sensible differences of the sun ; when it rises,—when it is at the highest point of elevation above the horizon,—and when it sets ; that is, they divided the day only into morning, noon, and night. These are the only parts of a day which we find mentioned in the Old Testament ; the day not being yet divided into twenty-four hours. Since that, the Jews and Romans divided the day (that is, the space between the rising and the setting of the sun) into four parts, consisting each of three hours : but those hours were different from ours ; in this respect,—that ours are always equal, being always the four and twentieth part of the day ; whereas with them the hour was a twelfth part of the time which the sun continued above the horizon. As this time is longer in summer than in winter, their summer hours must be longer than their winter ones. The first hour began at sun-rising ; noon was the sixth ;

and the twelfth ended at sun-set. The third hour divided the space between sun-rising and noon ; and the ninth divided that which was between noon and sun-set. It is with relation to this division of the day that Christ says, *Are there not twelve hours in the day ?*

Burder.

NO. 519.—MANNER OF COMFORTING MOURNERS.

xi. 19. *Many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.*

This was a common practice of the Jews after a funeral ; but they did not allow of it before. The first office of this kind was done when they returned from the grave : the mourners stood in their place in a row, and all the people passed by : every man, as he came to the mourner, comforted him, and passed on. Besides these consolations, there were others administered at their own houses during the first week ; and it was on the third day, more particularly, that these consolatory visits were paid. It was reckoned an act of great piety and mercy to comfort mourners.—*Gill.*

NO. 520.—CUSTOM OF VISITING THE GRAVES OF DEPARTED FRIENDS.

xi. 31. *She goeth unto the grave to weep there.*

Dr. Pococke informs us, that the Jews sometimes visited the graves of their friends, to pray, as well as to weep ; and at other times their visits were purely to lament their loss. This prevails among the Turks, whose women, on Friday, their day of worship, go before sun-rising to the grave of the deceased, where they mourn, and sprinkle their monuments with water and flowers.—*Gill.*

The East Indians, in mourning for the dead, appear to express their sorrow much in the same manner. Mr. Fountain says, "this morning, when I awoke, I heard a great noise made by a number of people on the bank of the tank, near my bungalow.* I went to see what was the matter: and found a number of women and girls assembled to lament over the grave of a lad who had been killed by a wild buffalo ten days before. The mother sat on the earth, at one end of the grave, leaning herself upon it, and bitterly exclaiming, "Amor Banban! Amor Banban!" Oh my child! my child! On the other end of the grave sat another female, who was expressing her grief in a similar manner. This is one of the usual customs of the Mahomedans, who make lamentations for their friends ten days after their decease.—*Burder.*

Chardin says, that the Persians, particularly, visit their burial-places in the morning or in the evening, having all their children with them, both great and small. There they sit themselves, to lament the dead with cries and tears, beating their breasts, tearing their faces and their hair, intermingled with long recitals of their former conversations with the deceased. The constant burthen of these lamentations is, "Rough! Rough! Soul! Spirit! Whither art thou gone? Wherefore dost thou not continue to animate this body?" And then, "Body, wherefore didst thou die? Didst thou want gold or silver, garments, pleasures, the tender caresses of those near to thee?"—and such like impertinences. They sometimes leave offerings of cakes, fruits, and sweetmeats; which are, they say, for the guardian angels of the sepulchre, to render them favorable to the deceased.—*Harmer.*

* An accommodation boat, used as an occasional residence.

NO. 521.—DESCRIPTION OF ANCIENT SEPULCHRES.

xii. 44. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes.

The Jewish sepulchres were generally caves or rooms hewn out of rocks: and as the Jews did not make use of coffins, they placed their dead separately, in niches, or little cells, cut into the sides of those caves or rooms.—*Maundrell.*

This form of the Jewish sepulchre suggests an easy solution of a very important difficulty in the history of Lazarus's resurrection. It is said, that when Jesus called upon Lazarus to come forth, *he came forth bound hand and foot.* But deists, talking of this miracle, commonly ask, with a sneer, how he could come out of a grave, who was bound in that manner? The answer however is obvious. The Evangelist does not mean that Lazarus walked out of the sepulchre; but that, lying on his back, he raised himself into a sitting posture, then putting his legs over the edge of his niche or cell, slid down and stood upright upon the floor; all which he might easily do, notwithstanding his arms were close bound to his body, and his legs were tied strait together, by means of the shroud and rollers with which he was swathed. Accordingly, when he was come forth, it is said, that Jesus ordered them to *loose him and let him go;* a circumstance plainly importing, that the historian knew that Lazarus could not walk 'till he was unbound.—

Macknight.

How shall I leave my tomb?
With triumph or regret?
A fearful or a joyful doom,
A curse, or blessing meet?

NO. 522.—EXCOMMUNICATION AMONG THE JEWS.

xvi. 2. *They shall put you out of the synagogues.*

There were three degrees of excommunication among the Jews ; the first is what is called in the New Testament *casting out of the synagogue*, and signifies a separation from all commerce or society ; it was of force thirty days, but might be shortened by repentance. If the person persisted in his obstinacy after the thirty days were expired, they excommunicated him again, with the addition of a solemn curse. This is supposed by some, to be the same with *delivering over to Satan*. The offence was published in the synagogue ; at which time candles were lighted, and when the proclamation was ended, they were extinguished, as a sign that the person excommunicated was deprived of the light of Heaven. His goods were confiscated ; his male children were not admitted to circumcision, and if he died without repentance, a stone was cast upon his coffin or bier, to shew that he deserved to be stoned, and he was not mourned for with any solemn lamentation. The last degree of excommunication was anathematizing, which was inflicted when the offender had often refused to comply with the sentence of the court, and was attended with corporal punishment, and sometimes with banishment and death.—*Burder.*

NO. 523.—EASTERN LAMPS AND LANTERNS.

xviii. 3. *Judas having received a band of men, and officers from the chief Priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns.*

Norden, speaking of the lamps and *lanterns* commonly made use of at Cairo, says, “ the lamp is of the

palm-tree wood, of the height of twenty-three inches, and made in a very gross manner. The glass that hangs in the middle is half filled with water, and has oil on the top, about three fingers in depth. The wick is preserved dry at the bottom of the glass, where they have contrived a place for it, and it ascends through a pipe. The *lanterns* have pretty nearly the figure of a cage, and are made of reeds. It is a collection of five or six glasses, like that of the lamp just described. They suspend them by cords in the middle of the streets, when there is any great festival at Cairo, and put painted paper in place of the reeds.

Were these the lanterns made use of by those who came to take Jesus? or were they such lamps as these that Christ referred to in the parable of the virgins? or are we rather to suppose, that these lanterns are appropriated to the Egyptian illuminations, and that Pococke's account of the lanterns of this country, will give us a better idea of those that were anciently used at Jerusalem? Speaking of the travelling of the people of Egypt, he says, "by night they rarely make use of tents, but lie in the open air, having large lanterns, made like a pocket paper lantern, the bottom and top being of copper tinned over, and instead of paper they are made with linen, which is extended by hoops of wire; so that when it is put together, it serves as a candlestick, &c.; and they have a contrivance to hang it up abroad, by means of three staves.—*Harmer.*

NO. 524.—JUDGMENT AMONG THE JEWS.

xviii 28. *The hall of judgment.*

The party accused, when he was upon his trial,

stood in an eminent place in the court; that the people might see him, and hear what was alledged against him, and the defence made by the criminal. There were two notaries in court; one stood on the right hand of the Judge to write the sentence of absolution, the other stood on the left to write the sentence of condemnation. These tribunals were strict in the examination of witnesses. They had a rule, that whoever gave a false testimony was subject to the same penalty that the person would have suffered if he had been cast by his false accusation. The sentence was pronounced in this manner:—“Thou Simeon art just.” “Thou Reuben art guilty.” When the sentence was delivered, the witnesses, if the case was capital, put their hands upon the head of the condemned person and said, “Thy blood be upon thy own head.” Then was the malefactor led to execution, and no one was allowed openly to lament his misfortune. As he was led to be executed, a public crier went before, saying, with an audible voice, “Such an one is going to be punished with such a death, &c. if any one knows any thing that can be offered to his advantage, let him come forth and give his evidence.” If any thing could be advanced on his defence, he was indulged with the liberty of returning four or five times. When the criminal came within ten cubits of the place of execution, two of the scholars of the wise men exhorted him to confess; and after giving him a stupifying draught, the execution took place.—*Lewis.*

NO. 525.—FISH FOUND IN THE SEA OF TIBERIAS.

xxi. 11. *Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to*

land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty, and three.

Travellers inform us, that the sea of Tiberias, i Galilee, abounds with fish, and some of them ver large. Hasselquist says, that several sorts of the fis in this great lake are the same with those found in the Nile; a circumstance which he thinks remarkable. Maillet assures us, that notwithstanding the prod gious quantity of fish in the Nile, there are scarce an which resemble those that are taken in the rivers o Europe, except the eel. Egmont and Hayman tell us, that the fish common to the sea of Galilee and the Nile are the karmud and the bonni, which they sa commonly weigh about thirty pounds apiece. *One hundred and fifty-three fishes of this size, or half thi size, might well be supposed by St. John greatly to endanger the net in which they were taken.*—

Harmer

Once more the gospel net we cast,
Do thou, O Lord, the effort own ;
We learn from disappointments past,
To rest our hope on thee alone.

BRACKENBURY.

NO. 526.—STRETCHING FORTH THE HANDS, A TOKEN
OF SUBMISSION.

xxi. 18. When thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.

It was customary in the ancient combats for the vanquished person to stretch out his hands to the conqueror; signifying, that he declined the battle, acknowledging that he was conquered, and submitting to the directions of the victor. Thus Theocritus :

And hands uprais'd, with death-presaging mind,
At once the fight and victory declin'd.

So also Turnus in Virgil :—

Thine is the conquest ; lo, the Latian bands,
Behold their Gen'ral stretch his suppliant hands.

In the instance now above cited, the stretching out of the hands was to be a token of submission to that power under which he would fall and perish.—

Burder.

ACTS.

NO. 527.—APOSTOLIC MANNER OF CASTING LOTS.

i. 26. *And they gave forth their lots ; and the lot fell upon Matthias.*

THE account which Grotius gives of the manner in which *lots* were cast, seems very probable and satisfactory. He says, they put their lots into two urns, one of which contained the names of Joseph and Matthias, and the other a blank and the word “Apostle.” In drawing these out of the urns, the blank came up with the name of Joseph, and the lot on which was written the word “Apostle” came up with the name of *Matthias*. This being in answer to their prayers, they concluded, that *Matthias* was the man whom the Lord had chosen to the apostleship.—

Burder.

NO. 528.—THE FOLLY OF OPPOSING GOD.

v. 39. *If it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it ; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.*

Ye cannot overthrow it, because the counsel of God cannot fail ; and his work cannot be counteracted. If he be determined that this doctrine shall prevail,

it is vain for us to attempt to suppress it. *Lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.* Some have thought that they saw a parallel to these words in the speech of Diomede, when seeing Mars associated with Hector, oppose the Grecians, he judged farther opposition vain, and desired his troops to retire from the battle.

Protected always by some pow'r divine ;
And Mars attends this moment at his side,
In form a man. Ye therefore still retire,
But facing still your foes : nor battle wage,
However fierce, yet fruitless, with the gods.

ILIA.D.

Clarke.

NO. 529.—DISTRIBUTION OF ALMS.

vi. 1. *There arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.*

A distribution of alms was made every day. This practice obtained among the Jews in common ; for they used to collect every day for the poor, and give it daily to them. Maimonides speaks of it in this manner :—“ They appoint collectors, who receive every day, from every court, a piece of bread, or any sort of food, fruit, or money, from whomsoever that offers freely ; and they divide that which is collected, in the evening, among the poor, giving to every one his daily sustenance.” From hence the apostles might have adopted the custom of *daily ministrations* to the poor.—Burder.

The *Grecians* here spoken of were not such as are elsewhere called Greeks, either as being of that nation, or more generally taken for Gentiles at large ; but they were Jews, descended from such of them who, in national calamities, left their country, and fled

to Alexandria, and other places, yet kept themselves unmixed with other nations, and came to worship upon the solemn feasts. In consequence of disusing the Hebrew language, they were more acquainted with the Greek tongue, which was commonly spoken every where, and used the scriptures translated into that language, which made them rather called Hellenists, or Grecians.—*Pool.*

NO. 530.—DESCRIPTION OF THE LIBERTINES.

vi. 9. *Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines.*

Great numbers of the Jews who were taken captive by Pompey, and carried into Italy, were there set at liberty, and obtained their freedom from their masters; their children therefore would be Libertini in the proper sense of that word; and, agreeably to this, the Jews banished from Rome by Tiberius are spoken of by Tacitus as of the libertine race. These might easily constitute one of the 480 synagogues said to have been at Jerusalem.—*Burder.*

Suidas, in his lexicon, says, that it is the name of a people. It appears, that there was in Lybia a town or district called *Libertina*, whose inhabitants bore the name of *Libertines*. They were Jews, and came up as the Cyrenian and Alexandrian Jews did, to bring their offerings to Jerusalem, and to worship God in the temple.—*Bishop Pearce.*

NO. 531.—KICKING AGAINST THE GOADS.

ix. 5. *It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*

This is a proverbial expression, which exists both in the Greek and Latin writers. The origin of the

proverb seems to have been this: sometimes it happens that a restive or stubborn ox kicks back against the goad, and thus wounds himself more deeply: hence it has become a proverb, to signify the fruitlessness and absurdity of rebelling against lawful authority; and the getting into greater difficulties by endeavoring to avoid trifling sufferings.

I, who am a frail mortal, should rather sacrifice to him who is a God, than, by giving place to anger, kick against the goads.—*Euripides.*

It is profitable to bear willingly the assumed yoke.
To kick against the goad, is pernicious conduct.

PINDAR.

Intelligent men, in all countries and in all ages of the world, have seen and acknowledged the folly and wickedness of fighting against God; of murmuring at the dispensations of his providence, and of opposing the purposes of his justice and mercy. The fable of the viper and the file is another illustration of this proverb: the viper gnawed and licked the file, 'till it had destroyed its teeth, and wasted away its tongue.—*Clarke.*

NO. 532.—SANDALS WORN IN THE EAST.

xii. 8. *Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals.*

Rauwolf informs us, that the Arabs of the Desart, when they are not able to buy shoes, take, instead of them, the necks of undressed skins, and put them about their feet with the hair outwards, and so tie and lace them up. This is probably the most ancient, because it is the most simple way.

Thevenot says, that the rich people in those countries wear socks and slippers of red or yellow

Morocco. Red is considered as the most magnificent covering for the feet: hence we find Bishop Pocoocke making a present of a pair of red shoes, with some other things, to the Sheikh of Cous.—*Harmer.*

NO. 533.—THE GODS SUPPOSED TO BE EARTHLY VISITORS.

xiv. 11. *The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.*

It appears from numberless passages in the Heathen writers, that they supposed the *gods* often descended *in the likeness of men*. Thus Homer represents one of his personages, in the character of a suitor, recommending hospitality to strangers by saying,

if in this low disguise

Wander perhaps some inmate of the skies:
They (curious oft of mortal actions) deign
In forms like these to round the earth and main,
Just and unjust recording in their mind,
And with sure eyes inspecting all mankind.

Burder.

Ovid had a similar notion where he represents Jupiter coming down to visit the earth; which seems to be copied from Gen. xviii. 20, 21.—*And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know.*

The clamours of this vile degenerate age,
The cries of orphans, and the oppressor's rage,
Had reach'd the stars: 'I will descend,' said I,
In hope to prove this loud complaint a lie.
Disguised in human shape, I travelled round
The world, and more than what I heard, I found.

DRYDEN.

It was a settled belief among the Egyptians, that their gods, sometimes in the likeness of men, and sometimes in the likeness of animals which they held sacred, descended to the earth, and travelled through different provinces, to punish, reward, and protect.

The Hindoo avatars, or incarnations of their gods, prove how generally this opinion prevailed. We need not wonder to find it in Lycaonia.—*Clarke.*

NO. 534.—OBLATION OF TONGUES.

xiv. 12. *And Paul, Mercurius; because he was the chief speaker.*

The Greeks had a custom of making an oblation of tongues at the conclusion of their sacrifices, pouring on them a libation of wine. This was to purge themselves from any evil words which they might have uttered: or because the tongue was reckoned the best part of the sacrifice, and so reserved for the completion of it: or they offered the tongues to the gods, as witnesses of what they had spoken. They offered the tongue to Mercury, because they believed him the giver of eloquence. Upon this practice Dacier remarks, that the people feared, lest, through wine and the joy of the festival, they might have uttered some words unbecoming the sanctity of the occasion. By the sacrifice of tongues, they signified, that they purged away whatever they had spoken amiss during the festival; and asked pardon of Mercury, who presided over discourse, that they might not carry home any uncleanness, which might prevent the communication of the blessings expected from the sacrifice.—

Bürder.

NO. 535.—SACRIFICES CROWNED WITH CHAPLETS.

xiv. 13. *Then the Priest of Jupiter, who was before the city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people.*

It was customary to build temples to their tutelar deities in the suburbs of the cities, and to set up their images before the city, at the gates. According to this practice, the Priest of that *Jupiter* who was esteemed the tutelar deity of the place, and whose image was placed in a temple erected to him before the city, brought oxen and garlands, to offer a sacrifice to Barnabas and Paul. They used to crown both the images of their deities, and the victims they offered to them, with chaplets and flowers.

The victim ox, that was for altars prest,
Trimm'd with white ribbons, and with garlands drest,
Sunk of himself, without the god's command,
Preventing the slow sacrificer's hand.

DRYDEN.

The Heathens considered their several images, of Jupiter for instance, as so many distinct Jupiters; that is, as having some spirit sent from the god, to whom their worship was ultimately referred, to reside in them. This circumstance, Bishop Warburton observes, may account for the dispute between two Jupiters, mentioned by Suetonius.—*Doddridge.*

The garlands were for the most part made of cypress; sometimes of the pine-tree; and of other leaves and flowers, such as were peculiar to the gods. Something similar to these practices obtained amongst the Jews at the offering of their first-fruits.—*Burder.*

NO. 536.—UNCOVERED BUILDINGS, PLACES OF WORSHIP.

xvi. 13. *On the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made.*

The proseucha was a place of prayer, or a place used for worship, where there was no synagogue. It was a large building, uncovered, with seats, as in an amphitheatre. Buildings of this sort the Jews had by the sea side, and by the sides of rivers. It appears, that the Apostles had heard from some of the Gentiles, or from some of the Jews themselves, that there was a place of prayer by the river side; and they went out in quest of it, knowing that as it was the sabbath, they should find some Jews there.—*Clarke.*

NO. 537.—EFFECTS OF THE SPIRIT OF DIVINATION.

xvi. 16. *A certain damsel, possessed with a spirit of divination, met us;*

Having a spirit of Python, or of Apollo. Pytho was, according to fable, a huge serpent, that had an oracle at Mount Parnassus, famous for predicting future events; that Apollo slew this serpent, and hence he was called Pythius, and became celebrated as the foreteller of future events; and that all those who either could, or pretended to predict future events, were influenced by the spirit of Apollo Pythius.

Clarke.

Virgil has described an inflated Prophetess of this kind:—

The virgin cries, “The God, behold the God!”
And straight her visage and her color change,
Her hair’s dishevell’d, and her heaving breast
And lab’ring heart are swell’n with sacred rage;
Larger she seems, her voice no mortal sound,
As the inspiring god near and more near
Seizes her soul.

Archbishop Potter says, that there were few that pretended to inspiration but raged after this manner, foaming and yelling, sometimes gnashing their teeth, shivering and trembling, with a thousand antic motions.—*Burder.*

NO. 538.—DESCRIPTION OF EASTERN STOCKS.

xvi. 24. *And made their feet fast in the stocks.*

It is generally supposed, that these were the cippi, or large pieces of wood, used among the Romans, which not only loaded the legs of prisoners, but sometimes distended them in a very painful manner; so that it is highly probable, the situation of Paul and Silas here, might be made more painful than that of an offender sitting in the stocks, as used among us; especially if, as is very possible, they lay with their bare backs, so lately scourged, on the hard or dirty ground; which renders their joyful frame, expressed by songs of praise, so much the more remarkable. Beza explains it of the numellu, in which both the feet and the neck were fastened, in the most uneasy posture that can well be imagined.—*Doddridge.*

NO. 539.—STRANGE GODS ADMITTED WITH DIFFICULTY.

xvii. 18. *He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods.*

The Romans were averse to *strange gods*, and admitted of their worship with great difficulty. Dion Cassius says, that one of the blackest crimes of Sardanapalus was introducing into Rome the worship of Heliogabalus. By the law of Athens, no foreign god was to be admitted, 'till approved and licensed by the Areopagus, which had the sole power in religious

matters. The severest laws were enacted at Athens; and every citizen was commanded, upon pain of death, to worship the gods and heroes, as the laws of the city required. They who observed not the appointed ceremonies were immediately dragged to the court of Areopagus. The cutting a twig out of a sacred grove was a capital offence: even a fool has been condemned for killing one of Esculapius's sparrows; and a child, accidentally taking up a plate of gold, fallen from Diana's crown, was put to death for sacrilege.—*Burder.*

NO. 540.—THE COURT OF THE AREOPAGITES.

xvii. 22. *Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars-hill.*

The court of the Areopagites, before which St. Paul was now brought, was so named from the place in which it was held, being on a hill, not far from the city, called Areopagus. This court was of high antiquity: it was instituted before the time of Solon; but when, it is uncertain. It is also equally unknown of what number this assembly was composed. It is however certain, that it was the most sacred and venerable tribunal in Greece. They were very particular in examining the characters of such persons as were admitted members of it. Any evidence of intemperance, excluded from the office; and though the dignity was usually held for life, yet if any of the senators were convicted of immorality, they were expelled. The utmost gravity was preserved in this assembly; and to laugh in their presence was an unpardonable act of levity. Demosthenes tells us, that so impartial were they in their proceedings, that to his time there never had been so

much as one of their determinations of which there had been any just reason to complain. Foreign states frequently referred to their decision. They had three meetings every month ; and always sat in the open air,—a custom practised in all the courts of justice that had cognizance of murder.—*Burder.*

NO. 541.—THE ANONYMOUS ALTAR.

xvii. 23. *As I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, To the unknown god.*

From the express testimony of Lucian, we learn, that there was such an inscription at Athens. Whence it arose, or to what it particularly referred, is difficult to say. Witsius understands it of Jehovah, whose name not being pronounced by the Jews themselves might give occasion to this appellation. Dr. Welwood supposes, that Socrates reared this altar, to express his devotion to the one living and true God, of whom the Athenians had no notion, and whose incomprehensible being he insinuated, by this inscription, to be far beyond the reach of their understanding, or his own. Hammond gives another explanation of the circumstance, which has appeared satisfactory to the learned. Diogenes Laertius, in his life of Epimenides, assures us, that in the time of that Philosopher (about 600 years before Christ) there was a terrible pestilence at Athens ; in order to avert which, when none of the deities to whom they sacrificed appeared able or willing to help them, Epimenides advised them to bring some sheep to the Areopagus, and letting them loose from thence, to follow them 'till they lay down, and then to sacrifice them to the god near whose

temple or altar they then were. Now it seems probable that, Athens not being then so full of these monuments of superstition as afterwards, these sheep lay down in places where none of them were near, and so occasioned the rearing of what the historian calls, anonymous altars ; or altars, each of which had the inscription, “To the unknown god ;” meaning thereby, the deity who had sent the plague, whoever he were : one of which altars at least, however it might have been repaired, remained ‘till St. Paul’s time, and long after.—*Burder.*

Shut up in unbelief, I groan,
And blindly serve a God unknown,
Till thou the veil remove ;
The gift unspeakable impart,
And write thy name upon my heart,
And manifest thy love.

NO. 542.—EASTERNS GIVE THEIR CHILDREN A TRADE.

xviii. 3. *Because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought ; for by their occupation they were tent-makers.*

It was a received custom among the Jews, for every man, of what rank or quality soever, to learn some trade or handy-craft. One of their proverbial expressions is, that “whoever teaches not his son a trade, teaches him to be a thief.” In those hot countries, where tents were used, not only by soldiers but by travellers and others whose business required them to be abroad, a tent-maker was no mean or unprofitable employment. This custom, so generally practised by the Jews, was adopted also by other nations in the East. Sir Paul Rycaut observes, that the Grand Seignior, to whom he was Ambassador, was taught to

make wooden spoons. The intention of this usage was not merely amusement, but to furnish the persons so instructed with some method of obtaining their living, should they ever be reduced to want and poverty.—*Burder.*

NO. 543.—DESCRIPTION OF JEWISH SCHOOLS.

xix. 9. *Disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.*

Among the Jews there were two kinds of schools wherein the law was taught, private and public. Their private schools were those wherein a Doctor of the law entertained his scholars, and were usually styled houses of learning. Their public schools were those where their consistories sat to resolve all difficulties and differences of the law. The method of teaching adopted in the schools is observable in the scripture. When Jesus Christ was twelve years of age he was found in the temple, *in the midst of the Doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions.* Luke ii. 44. Philo says, that among the Essenes the children sat at the feet of their masters, who interpreted the law, and explained the figurative and allegorical sense of it, after the manner of the ancient Philosophers. Among the Hebrews the Rabbins sat on chairs that were raised : those scholars who were the greatest proficients, were placed on benches just below their masters ; and the younger sort sat on the ground, on hassocks. St. Paul says, that he was *brought up at the feet of Gamaliel.*—Acts xxii. 3.—

Calmet.

NO. 544.—THEATRES USED FOR PUBLIC BUSINESS.

xix. 29. *They rushed with one accord into the Theatre.*

Among the Greeks the theatres served, not only for

the exhibition of public shows and games, but often for holding public assemblies on affairs of the greatest importance. Josephus says, "when the Alexandrians were assembled concerning the embassy which they were sending to Nero, many of the Jews crowded into the amphitheatre with the Greeks." And again he speaks of the Antiochians holding an assembly upon public business in the theatre.—*Burder.*

NO. 545.—ORIGIN OF EASTERN LOVE-FEASTS.

xx. 7. Upon the first day of the week, when the Disciples came together to break bread.

In the Jewish way of speaking, *to break bread* is the same as to make a meal: and the meal here meant seems to have been one of those which was called "love-feasts." Such of the Heathens as were converted to Christianity, were obliged to abstain from meats offered to idols, which were the main support of the poor in the heathen cities. The Christians, therefore, who were rich, seem very early to have begun the custom of those love-feasts, which they made on every first day of the week, chiefly for the benefit of the poorer Christians, who, by being such, had lost the benefit, which they used to have for their support, of eating part of the heathen sacrifices. It was towards the latter end of those feasts, or immediately after them, that the Christians used to take bread and wine in remembrance of Jesus Christ, which, from what attended it, was called the eucharist, or holy communion.—*Bishop Pearce.*

Come, and let us sweetly join,
Christ to praise in hymns divine!
Give we all, with one accord,
Glory to our common Lord;

Hands, and hearts, and voices raise :
Sing as in the ancient days ;
Ante date the joys above,
Celebrate the feast of love.

NO. 546.—ROMAN PRISONERS BOUND WITH CHAINS.

xxi. 33. *And commanded him to be bound with two chains.*

Prisoners amongst the Romans were fettered and confined in a singular manner: one end of a chain, which was of a commodious length, was fixed about the right arm of the prisoner, and the other about the left arm of a soldier. Thus a soldier was coupled to the prisoner, and every where attended him. In this manner was St. Paul confined, when he made his incomparable apology before Festus. Sometimes the prisoner was fastened to two soldiers, one on each side.—See Acts xii. 6.—*Burder.*

In this treatment of the Apostle, was exactly fulfilled what Agabus had prophesied concerning him—verse 11. So does God provide, that not one word of his servants, which they speak from him, shall fail; and that St. Paul should be heard before he was condemned.—*Pool.*

NO. 547.—MANNER OF EXPRESSING COMPLAINTS.

xxii. 23. *They cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air.*

A great similarity appears between the conduct of the Jews, when the chief Captain of the Roman garrison at Jerusalem presented himself in the temple, and the behaviour of the Persian peasants, when they go to court to complain of the Governors under whom they live, upon their oppression becoming intolerable.

Sir J. Chardin informs us respecting them, that they carry their complaints against their Governors by companies consisting of several hundreds, and sometimes of a thousand: they repair to that gate of the palace near to which their Prince is most likely to be; where they set themselves to make the most horrid cries, tearing their garments, and *throwing dust into the air*, at the same time demanding justice. The King, upon hearing these cries, sends to know the occasion of them. The people deliver their complaint in writing; upon which he lets them know that he will commit the cognizance of the affair to such an one. In consequence of this, justice is usually done them. This tallies with the account given us of the Jews; and leads us to consider their conduct merely as a demand of justice from the Roman Commandant in Jerusalem, according to the usual Asiatic form, which continues to this day.—*Harmer.*

NO. 548.—CUSTOM OF SMITING UPON THE MOUTH.

xxiii. 2. *And the High-Priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him, to smite on the mouth.*

A similar modern instance of the brutality with which criminals are treated in the East, occurs in Hanway's travels. When Sadoc Aga, one of the Chiefs of the Persian rebels, at Astrabad, in the year 1744, was brought before Nadir Shah's General, and examined by him, he answered the questions put to him, but lamented his miserable change of circumstances in very pathetic terms; upon which the General ordered him to be struck across the mouth, to silence him; which was done with such violence that the blood issued forth.—*Burder.*

NO. 549.—MANNER OF APPEAL AMONG THE ROMANS.

xxv. 11. *I appeal unto Cesar.*

This way of appealing was frequent among the Romans, introduced to defend and secure the lives and fortunes of the populace from the unjust encroachments and over-rigorous severities of the Magistrates. In cases of oppression, it was lawful to appeal for redress and rescue. This practice was more than once sanctioned by the Valerian laws. These appeals were generally made in writing, by appellatory libels given into the court, and containing an account of the appellant, the person against whom and from whose sentence he appealed; but where it was done in open court, it was enough for the criminal verbally to declare, that he did appeal. In great and weighty cases, the appeal was made to the Prince himself; whereupon, not only at Rome but in all the provinces of the empire, every Proconsul and Governor was strictly forbidden to execute, scourge, bind, or put any badge of servility upon a citizen, or any that had the privilege of a citizen, who had made his appeal, or in any way to hinder him from going to Rome to obtain justice at the hands of the Emperor. In the case of St. Paul, the privilege of appealing seems to have been so fully established by the Roman laws, that Festus durst not deny his demand.—*Stackhouse.*

NO. 550.—SHIPS CARRYING THE IMAGES OF TUTELAR DEITIES.

xxviii. 11. *We departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.*

It was the custom of the ancients to have images

on their ships, both at the head and stern ; the first of which was called the *sign*, from which the ship was named ; and the other was that of the tutelar deity to whose care the ship was committed. There is no doubt that they had sometimes deities at the head ; and then it is most likely, if they had any figure at the stern, it was the same ; as it is hardly probable the ship should be called by the name of one deity, and be committed to the care of another.—*Doddridge.*

Castor and Pollux were supposed to be the sons of Jupiter and Leda, to have the ordering of tempests and the care of mariners, and hence were chosen for the patrons of the ship. These two fabulous semi-deities were afterwards translated to the Heavens, and made the constellation Gemini or the twins.—*Pool, &c.*

ROMANS.

NO. 551.—DEAD BODIES FASTENED TO LIVING ONES.

vii. 24. *Who shall deliver me from the body of this death !*

WRETCHED man that I am ! do I often cry out in such a circumstance, with no better supports and incitements than the law can give. Who shall rescue me, miserable captive that I am, from the body of this death ? from this burden which I carry about with me ; and which is cumbersome and odious as a dead carcase tied to a living body, to be dragged along with it wherever it goes. Some ancient writers mention this as a cruelty, practised by some tyrants, on miserable captives who fell into their hands ; and a more

forcible and expressive image of the case represented, cannot, surely, enter into the mind of man.—

Doddridge.

Who shall deliver me from *this body of death*, from this dead body, this mass of sin to which I am fastened, which is as offensive to my soul, as a dead carcase to my senses? *I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

NO. 552.—ADOPTION AMONG THE ROMANS.

viii. 23. *Waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*

Among the Romans, there was a two-fold *adoption*, the one private, the other public: the former was only the act of the person who was desirous of receiving a stranger into his family, with respect to the object of his choice; and was a transaction between the parties; the latter was an acknowledgment of it in the forum, when the adopted person was solemnly declared and avowed to be the son of the adopter. To this circumstance, Mr. Howe supposes the Apostle alludes in these words.—*Burder.*

We would no longer lie,
Like slaves beneath the throne;
My faith shall Abba Father cry,
And thou the kindred own.

WATTS.

NO. 553.—EASTERN HOSPITALITY.

xii. 13. *Given to hospitality.*

Hospitality has always been highly esteemed by civilized nations. It has been exercised from the earliest ages of the world. The Old Testament affords numerous instances of its being practised

in the most free and liberal manner. In the New Testament it is also recommended and enforced. The primitive Christians were so ready in the discharge of this duty, that even the Heathens admired them for it. Hospitable as they were to all strangers, they were particularly so to those who were of their own faith and communion. In Homer, and the ancient Greek writers, we see what respect they had for their guests. From these instances we turn with satisfaction to view the kind and friendly disposition of less polished people. Modern travellers often mention the pleasing reception they met with from those among whom they made a temporary residence.

Volney, speaking of the Druzes, says, "whoever presents himself at their door, in the quality of a suppliant or passenger, is sure of being entertained with lodging and food, in the most generous and unaffected manner. I have often seen the lowest peasants give the last morsel of bread they had in their houses to the hungry traveller."

The Hindoos extend their hospitality, sometimes to enemies, saying, "the tree does not withdraw its shade, even from the wood-cutter."--*Burder.*

I. CORINTHIANS.

NO. 554.—TREATMENT OF THE APOSTLES.

iv, 13. *We are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.*

DODDRIDGE thus paraphrases, and in his note explains, these words.—"We are made and treated like the very *filth* of the world; like the

wretches who, being taken from the dregs of the people, are offered as expiatory sacrifices to the infernal deities among the Gentiles, and loaded with curses, affronts, and injuries in the way to the altars at which they are to bleed,—or like the refuse of all things to this day, the very sweepings of the streets and stalls, a nuisance to all around us, and fit for nothing but to be trampled upon by the meanest and vilest of mankind.” It refers to the custom of purifying a city by the expiatory death of some person. For this purpose they clothed a man in foul and filthy garments, and then put him to death. When the city was visited with any great calamity, they chose one of the lowest persons in it, and brought him to a certain place, with cheese, dry figs, and a cake in his hand. After beating him with rods, they burnt him and the rods together in a ditch, and cast the ashes into the sea, with these words, “Be thou a lustration for us.”

The people of Marseilles, originally a Grecian colony, had a similar custom; for we learn, from Servius, that as often as they were afflicted with the pestilence, they took a poor person, who offered himself willingly, and kept him a whole year on the choicest food, at the public expence. This man was afterwards dressed up with vervain, in the sacred vestments, and led through the city, where he was loaded with execrations, that all the misfortunes of the state might rest on him, and was then thrown into the sea. The Mexicans had a similar custom of keeping a man a year, and even worshipping him during that time, and then sacrificing him.—*Burder.*

NO. 555.—DESCRIPTION OF THE OLYMPIC CROWN.

ix. 25. *They do it to obtain a corruptible crown ; but we an incorruptible.*

It is well known, that the *crown* in the Olympic games, sacred to Jupiter, was of wild-olive ; in the Pythian, sacred to Apollo, of laurel ; in the Isthmian, or Corinthian, solemnized in honor of Palemon, of pine-tree ; and in the Nemean, of smellage, or parsley. Now most of these were evergreens ; yet they would soon grow dry and break to pieces. Elsner produces many passages in which the contenders in these exercises are rallied by the Grecian wits for the extraordinary pains they took for such trifling rewards : and Plato has a celebrated passage, which greatly resembles this of St. Paul, but by no means equals it in beauty and force :—*Doddridge.*

Who in th' Olympic race the prize would gain,
Has borne from early youth fatigue and pain,
Excess of heat and cold has often tried,
Love's softness banish'd, and the glass denied.

HORACE.

If these gamesters could make such sacrifices to obtain a garland of leaves, it must be a shame to Christians not to walk by the rule of temperance to obtain an *incorruptible crown of glory.*

NO. 556.—BEATING THE AIR.

ix, 26, 27. *So fight I, not as one that beateth the air : but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection ; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away.*

In order to attain the greater agility and dexterity,

it was usual for those who intended to box in the games, to exercise their arms with the gauntlet, when they had no antagonist near them. But Bos has taken a great deal of pains in his note here, to shew that it is a proverbial expression for a man's missing his blow, and spending it, not on his enemy, but upon empty air. Dr. Doddridge renders the latter part of our text thus:—"lest, after having served as an Herald, I should be disapproved;" and adds, "I thought it of importance to retain the primitive sense of these gymnastic expressions. It is well known to those who are at all acquainted with the original, that the word expresses the discharging the office of an Herald, whose business it was to proclaim the conditions of the games, and display the prizes, to awaken the emulation of those who were to contend in them. But the Apostle intimates, that there was this peculiar circumstance attending the Christian contest—that the person who proclaimed its laws and rewards to others was also to engage himself; and that there would be a peculiar infamy and misery in miscarrying. The word which we render *cast-away* signifies one who is disapproved by the Judge of the games, as not having fairly deserved the prize."—

Burder.

This single text may give us a just notion of the scriptural doctrine of election and reprobation; and clearly shews us, that particular persons are not in holy writ represented as *elected* absolutely and unconditionally to eternal life, or predestinated absolutely and unconditionally to eternal death.—*Wesley.*

NO. 557.—THE CUP OF BLESSING,

x. 16. *The cup of blessing, which we bless.*

This cup is so called, in allusion to the cup of wine used at common meals, or at the passover among the Jews; which they used to take and bless God with, and give him thanks for his mercies. It was commonly called *the cup of blessing*.—*Gill.*

NO. 558.—MEAT SOLD IN THE SHAMBLES.

x. 25. *Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake.*

The word rendered *shambles*, is made use of by Latin writers in the same sense as it is here—for a place where food is sold. The original of the name is said to be this:—One Macillus, a very wicked and profane man, being condemned to die, a place was built in his house by Emilius and Fulvius for selling provisions; and from his name it was called macellum.—*Gill.*

It is possible, that butchers, before they brought their meat to market, might offer some part of it to the idol; or perhaps the Priests, who had a share in the beasts offered to idols; or the people that offered such beasts, who also had a share returned them, might, out of covetousness, sell it in the market. The Apostle directeth the Corinthians in such cases, to make no scruple of it, if it were sold in the *shambles*; which argued, that the thing itself was not sinful; but yet he would have them in that case ask no questions whence it came.—*Pool.*

Herodotus says, that the Egyptians used to cut off the heads of their beasts that were sacrificed, and carry them into the market to sell to the Greeks; and if there were no buyers, they cast them into the river.

NO. 559.—COVERING THE HEAD IN RELIGIOUS WORSHIP.

xi. 4. *Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoreth his head.*

This had become customary with some of them, in public worship ; and they did it in imitation of the Heathens, who worshipped their deities with their heads covered, except Saturn and Hercules, whose solemnities were celebrated with heads unveiled ; or of the Jews, who used to veil themselves in public worship, through a spirit of bondage and fear.—*Gill.*

NO. 560.—THE SOUNDING BRASS OF DELOS.

xiii. 1. *Though I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.*

Mr. Burder says, one of the most ancient as well as the most celebrated oracles of the Pagan world was that at the island of Delos. In early ages, and at the first commencement of these absurd and ridiculous impositions on mankind, they were delivered by the murmuring noise of a fountain, or at the foot of an oak ; and also from the oaks themselves : but in succeeding times they made use of the brazen kettle, which utensil the ancient Greek poet Callimachus calls the *sounding brass*.

These to the Delian god
Begin the grand procession ; and in hand
The holy sheaves and mystic offering bear :
Which the Pelasgians, who the sounding brass
On earth recumbent, at Dodona guard,
Joyous receive, and to the Melians' care
The hallow'd gifts consign.

HYMN TO DELOS.

By *charity* we understand love both to God and man ; without which I am no better before God than the sounding instruments of brass used in the worship of some of the Heathen gods.—*Wesley*.

NO. 561.—ST. PAUL'S CONTEST AT EPHESUS.

xv. 32. *If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus.*

There were two sorts of usages among the Romans in their theatres. Sometimes they cast men naked to the wild beasts to be devoured by them : sometimes they put men armed into the theatre to fight with beasts ; and if they could conquer them and save themselves, they had their liberty ; but if not, they fell a prey to the beasts.

As this was the punishment of slaves and vile persons, it can hardly be thought that St. Paul, who was a free-man of Rome, was thus treated : but the meaning of the Apostle appears to be this,—“If I have fought with beastly men at *Ephesus after the manner that men fight with beasts*, exposing my body to their rage and fury, what profit is it to me, if the dead rise not?”—*Pool*.

NO. 562.—ANATHEMA MARAN-ATHA.

xvi. 22. *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maran-atha.*

When the Jews lost the power of life and death, they used nevertheless to pronounce an *anathema* on persons who, according to the Mosaic law, should have been executed ; and such a person became an *anathema*, or accursed ; for the expressions are equivalent. They had a full persuasion that the curse

would not be in vain; and indeed it appears, they expected some judgment, corresponding to that which the law pronounced, would befall the offender; for instance, that a man to be stoned would be killed by the falling of a stone or some other heavy body upon him; a man to be strangled would be choaked; or one whom the law sentenced to the flames would be burnt in his house; and the like. Now to express their faith that God would one way or another, and probably in some remarkable manner, interpose, to add that efficacy to his own sentence, which they could not give it, it is very probable they might use the words *maran-atha*; that is, in Syriac, the Lord cometh, or he will surely and quickly come, to put this sentence in execution, and to shew that the person on whom it falls is indeed anathema—accursed. In beautiful allusion to this, when the Apostle was speaking of a secret alienation from Christ, maintained under the forms of Christianity (which might perhaps be the case among many of the Corinthians), as this was not a crime capable of being convicted and censured in the Christian church, he reminds them that the Lord Jesus Christ will come at length, and find it out, and punish it in a proper manner. This weighty sentence the Apostle chose to write with his own hand, and insert it between his general salutation and benediction, that it might be the more attentively regarded.—*Doddridge.*

NO. 563.—AMBASSADORS CONSIDERED AS SACRED.

v. 20. *We are Ambassadors for Christ.*

AMBASSADORS were generally persons of great worth or eminent station ; that by their quality and deportment they might command respect and attention from their very enemies : and what injuries or affronts soever had been committed, their persons were held sacred by all sides. Gods and men were thought to be concerned to prosecute with the utmost vengeance all injuries done to them : whence we read, that the Lacedemonians having inhumanly murdered Xerxes' Ambassadors, the gods would accept none of their oblations and sacrifices, which were all found polluted with direful omens, 'till two noblemen of Sparta were sent as an expiatory sacrifice to Xerxes, to atone for the death of his Ambassadors by their own. Whence this holiness upon Ambassadors was derived, has been a matter of dispute. Fabulous authors deduce it from the honor paid by the ancients to the Heralds, who were either themselves Ambassadors, or, when others were deputed to that service, accompanied them, being held sacred on account of their original, because descended from Ceryx, the son of Mercury, who was honored with the same employment in Heaven which these obtained on Earth. The Lacedemonian Ambassadors carried in their hand a staff of laurel or olive, round which two serpents (without their crests erected) were folded, as an emblem of peace and concord. The Athenian Heralds frequently made use of an olive-branch covered with wool, and adorned with all sorts of fruits of the earth, which was a token of peace and plenty.—

Potter.

NO. 564.—EASTERN OPINION OF HEROES.

vi. 7. *By the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left.*

It has been conjectured that the meaning of the Apostle in these words is, that the spiritual warrior should be like those who could use, with equal alertness and vigour, *the left hand and the right*: prepared to resist on each side the wiles of the devil: they who could use both hands were on this account esteemed to be the greatest heroes.—Such was Asteropeus, in Homer.—Such some suppose were the left-handed men mentioned Judges xx. 16.—

Bulkley.

The left side, according to the superstition of the Grecians, was accounted unlucky, and of evil omen. The omens that appeared to the east were accounted fortunate, because the great principle of all light and heat, motion and life, diffuses his first influences from that part of the world. On the contrary, the western omens were unlucky, because the sun declines in that quarter. The augurs, when they made observations, kept their faces towards the north, and then the east was upon their right hand, and the west upon their left. Thus Homer brings in Hector telling Polydamus, that he regarded not the birds:

Ye vagrants of the sky! your wings extend
Or where the suns arise, or where descend,
To right and left unheeded take your way. *POPE.*

Burder.

NO. 565.—OFFICERS CHOSEN BY THE CHURCH.

viii. 19. *Who was also chosen of the churches.*

This choice was, by the suffrage of the churches,

performed by holding up hands. It was derived from an ancient custom of the Athenians in the choice of their Magistrates. The candidates being proposed to the people, they shewed their choice by holding up their hands. He who had the most, was declared duly elected. Thus there was a brother appointed by the suffrage of the churches to travel along with Paul, and convey their alms to the poor saints in Judea. See also Acts xiv. 23.—*Burder.*

GALATIANS.

NO. 566.—WITCHCRAFT OF THE ANCIENTS.

iii. 1. *O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?*

IT is not to be imagined that the Apostle, by the use of this expression, gave any countenance to the popular error which prevailed, not only among the Heathens, but among some of the more ignorant and superstitious Christians—that of fascination, or bewitching with the eye. The language of the Apostle is only a strong expression, of surprize at the departure of the Galatians from the purity of the gospel. It however reminds us of those practices of the Heathens which are spoken of by various writers. They believe that great mischief might ensue from an evil eye, or from being regarded with envious and malicious looks. Pliny relates, from Isigonus, that, among the Triballians and Illyrians, there were certain enchanters, who with their looks could bewitch and kill those whom they beheld for a considerable time, especially if they did so with angry eyes. A shepherd, in Virgil, says,

Some evil eyes bewitch my tender lambs.

Shaw says, "no nation in the world is so much given to superstition as the Arabs, or even Mahomedans in general. They hang about their children's necks the figure of an open hand, usually the right, which the Turks and Moors paint likewise upon their ships and houses, as a counter-charm to an evil eye; five is with them an unlucky number; and five (meaning their fingers) in your eyes is their proverb of cursing and defiance. Those of riper years carry with them some paragraph of their Koran, which they place upon their breasts, or sew under their caps, to prevent fascination and witchcraft, and to secure themselves from sickness and misfortunes. The virtue of these scrolls and charms is supposed to be so far universal, that they suspend them even upon the necks of their cattle, horses, and other beasts of burthen."—*Burder.*

NO. 567.—OBSERVANCE OF PARTICULAR DAYS.

iv. 10. *Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.*

This practice was become very general in the days of the Apostle, and greatly contributed to cherish superstition. The Greeks, in particular, were addicted to it: with them certain *times* were ominous, some *days* being accounted fortunate and successful, others unfortunate and disastrous. Thus Hesiod observes:

Some days, like step-dames, adverse prove,

Thwart our intentions, cross whate'er we love.

Others more fortunate and lucky shine,

And, as a tender mother, bless what we design.

The observation of days was also very common at Rome. Augustus Cæsar never went abroad upon the day following the nundinæ, nor began any serious

undertaking on the nonæ; and this he did upon no other account, as he affirmed in one of his letters to Tiberias, than to avoid the unlucky omen that attended things begun on those days. The like observation of days was practised by many Christians, when they had lately been converted from Heathenism ; and for this St. Paul reproves them.—*Potter, &c.*

EPHESIANS.

NO. 568.—JEWISH PROSELYTES, STYLED STRANGERS.

ii. 19. *Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.*

THE proselytes who joined themselves to the God of Israel were, by the Jews and by the scriptures, styled *strangers*. He that only took upon him to worship the true God, and observe the precepts of Noah, was “*Ger Toshab*,” a stranger permitted to dwell among them, and to worship in the court of the Gentiles. He that was circumcised, and became obedient to the law of Moses, was “*Ger Tzedek*,” a proselyte of righteousness ; but both were called *strangers*, according to the maxim of the Jews. All the nations of the world are called *strangers* before the God of Israel ; but the Jews are said to be near to him. But now, according to the language of the Apostle, there is no such difference ; the believing Gentile being equally admitted with believing Jews, to the privileges of the New Jerusalem, and equally related to God, as part of his family.—*Whitby.*

NO. 569.—A PYTHAGOREAN MAXIM.

iv. 26. *Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.*

Many persons have observed, that this was agreeable to the practice of the Pythagoreans: if the members of their particular society had any difference with each other, they used to give tokens of reconciliation, before the sun went down. This exhortation is peculiarly important to prevent excessive and long protracted anger, which might in time increase to habitual malice; a temper exceedingly unbecoming a Christian.—*Burder.*

Anger may enter into the mind of a wise man, but it will rest only in the bosom of a fool.

NO. 570.—DESCRIPTION OF THE BACCHANALIA.

v. 18. *Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess.*

It is highly probable, that here may be a particular reference to those dissolute ceremonies called the bacchanalia, that were celebrated by the Heathens in honor of him whom they call the god of wine. While these rites continued, men and women made it a point of their religion to intoxicate themselves, and run about the streets, fields, and vineyards, singing, and shouting in a wild and tumultuous manner; in opposition to which extravagant vociferations, the use of devout psalmody is with great propriety recommended. Plato somewhere tells us, that there was hardly a sober person to be found in the whole Attican territories during the continuance of these detestable solemnities:—*Doddridge.*

For fruitful vintages the dancing throng
Roar'd to the gol of grapes a drunken song:
Wild mirth and wine sustain'd the frantic note,
And the best singer had the prize,—a goat. BOILEAU.

NO. 571.—CONSTRUCTION OF LIGHT-HOUSES.

ii. 15. *Among whom ye shine as lights in the world.*

THIS metaphor has an allusion to the buildings which we call light-houses; the most illustrious of which was raised in the island of Pharos, when Ptolemy Philadelphus built that celebrated tower on which a bright flame was always kept burning in the night, that mariners might perfectly see their way, and be in no danger of suffering shipwreck. Some of these light-houses were constructed in the form of human figures: thus the Colossus at Rhodes held in one hand a flame which enlightened the whole port. Public lights were also sometimes moveable; and being fixed to the top of poles, they were used to direct the marches of the caravans in the night. The meaning of the passage, from these representations, is obvious. *Ye shine as elevated lights in this dark world, that ye may direct those who sail on this dangerous sea, and secure them from suffering shipwreck; or guide those who travel through this desert, in their way to the city of rest.*—*Burder.*

NO. 572.—DOGS CHAINED TO THE DOORS OF HOUSES.

iii. 2. *Beware of dogs.*

The Jews used to call the Gentiles *dogs*; and perhaps St. Paul may use this language, when speaking of their proud bigots, by way of retaliation.* L'Enfant tells us of a custom at Rome to chain their dogs at the doors of their houses, and to put an inscription over them, “*Beware of this dog;*” to which he seems to think these words may refer.—*Doddridge.*

Isaiah calls the false Prophets *dumb dogs*, Isa. lvi. 10. to which the Apostle here seems to refer. They were

* Rev. xxii. 15.

dogs for their malice against the faithful professors of the gospel of Christ, barking at them, and biting them.—*Henry.*

NO. 573.—PRIZES IN THE GRECIAN GAMES.

iii. 14, *I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

Here is a beautiful allusion to the Olympic games, and especially the foot-races, which made the most celebrated part of them. The prize was placed in a very conspicuous situation, so that the competitors might be animated by having it always in their sight. The word is considered, by some, as expressing the principal prize, whilst some of the racers might come to the goal and receive lower rewards. Doddrige says, that notwithstanding such inferior prizes were common in some games, secondary prizes were not bestowed on the Olympic foot-race.

L'Enfant thinks, that the Apostle, in the words before us, compares our Lord to those who stood at the elevated place at the end of the course calling the racers by their names, and encouraging them, by holding out the crown, to exert themselves with vigour.—*Burder.*

NO. 574.—REGISTERS OF CITIES.

iv. 3. *Whose names are in the book of life.*

This expression refers to the custom of those cities which had registers containing the names of all the citizens, from which the names of infamous persons were erased. Agreeably to this we read of names being blotted out of God's book,—Rev. iii. 5. Those citizens who were orderly and obedient were continued

on the roll ; from whence they could easily obtain their title to all the immunities and privileges common to all the members of the city : and to be excluded from these was both disgraceful and injurious.—*Burder.*

In thy bright book of life divine,
My God, inscribe my name :
There let it fill some humble place,
Beneath the slaughter'd Lamb.

Reader, is thy name *in the book of life?* Then walk circumspectly, lest the Lord blot thee out of his book for ever.

COLOSSIANS.

NO. 575. - CANCELLING OF BONDS.

ii. 14. *Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances, that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.*

THE *hand-writing* signifies a bill or bond, whereby a person binds himself to some payment or duty, and which stands in force against him 'till the obligation is discharged. In these words the Apostle alludes to the different methods by which bonds formerly were cancelled : one was by *blotting* or crossing them out with a pen, and another was by striking a nail through them. In either of these cases the bond was rendered useless, and ceased to be valid. These circumstances the Apostle applies to the death of Christ.—*Burder.*

By the *hand-writing of ordinances* is to be understood the ceremonial institutions, or the *law of commandments contained in ordinances*,* which was a

* Eph. ii. 15.

yoke to the Jews, and a *partition-wall* to the Gentiles. The Lord Jesus took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; disannulled the obligation of it, that all might see, and be satisfied, that it was no more binding. When the substance was come, the shadows flew away.—*Henry.*

NO. 576.—WARNING AGAINST THE ESSENES.

ii. 21. *Touch not, taste not, handle not.*

The dogmata to which St. Paul refers in these words, are such as the Essenes held. They would not taste any pleasant food, but lived upon coarse bread, and drank nothing but water: some of them would not taste any food at all till after sun-set; and if they were touched by any that were not of their own sect, they would wash themselves, as after some great pollution. Perhaps there might be a sodality of Essenes, at Colosse, as there were in many other places out of Judea; and that some of the Christians, too much inclined to Judaism, might also affect the peculiarities of this sect; which might be the reason why the Apostle so particularly cautions against them.—*Jennings.*

II. THESSALONIANS.

NO. 577.—APPLAUSES IN THE GRECIAN GAMES.

iii. 1. *That the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified.*

SOME think that these words allude to the applauses given to those who made a speedy progress

in the races, which constituted so important a part of the Grecian games.—*Burder.*

All the forces of Hell were then, and still are, more or less, raised and mustered to oppose the word of the Lord, to hinder its publication and success: we should pray, therefore, that oppositions may be removed, that so the gospel *may have free course* to the ears, the hearts, and the consciences of men; that it may be *glorified* in the conviction and the conversion of sinners, the confutation of gainsayers, and the holy conversation of the saints.—*Henry.*

I. TIMOTHY.

NO. 578.—MEN-STEALING.

i. 10. *For men-stealers.*

THERE were persons who made it their business to decoy servants and freemen, that they might steal, and sell them for slaves. Against this practice there were particular laws enacted under the Mosaic economy.* It was also condemned by the Flavian law among the Romans; and was not allowed among the Greeks. The death with which such persons were punished, according to the Jews, was strangling.—*Burder.*

Those were the worst of all thieves; in comparison of whom highwaymen and house-breakers are innocent.—*Wesley.*

* Exod. xxi. 16. Deut. x. 17.

NO. 579.—COSTLINESS OF FEMALE DRESS.

ii. 9. *That women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety: not with braided hair, &c.*

Maillett tells us, that the dress of the Egyptian ladies is much more rich and magnificent than any thing of that kind among us; that it consists of a quantity of pearls, precious stones, costly furs, and other things of value: in fine, that three ladies of France may be handsomely dressed for the same sum that a common habit comes to in Egypt.

Gill says, that the Jewish females used to wear a crown of gold on their heads, in the form of the city of Jerusalem, called a golden city. They wore it in memory of Jerusalem, after its destruction.

The *plaiting of the hair* was anciently practised in the East, and continues to be the common usage of those countries. Shaw speaks of its present use in Barbary; and says, that the Moorish ladies all affect this way of disposing of their hair. The Editor of the Ruins of Palmyra found that it anciently obtained there; for they discovered, with great surprise, mummies in the Palmyrene sepulchres embalmed after the ancient Egyptian manner; by which means the bodies were in such a state of preservation, that among other fragments they carried off with them, was the hair of a female, plaited exactly after the manner commonly used by the Arabian women at this time.—*Harmer.*

Good works are the best ornaments;

For death, ere long, will close the brightest eyes;
But virtue, heav'n-born virtue, never dies. WRIGHT.

NO. 580.—EASTERS FREQUENTLY WASH THEIR FEET.

v. 10. *If she have washed the saints' feet.*

The necessity for *washing the feet*, in the East, has been attributed to their wearing sandals: but it appears, whatever be the covering of the feet, that washing them is very requisite. Chardin says, that those who travel in the hot countries of the East, when they arrive at the end of their journey, immediately begin to pull off the coverings of their feet. The sweat, and the dust which penetrates all sorts of coverings for the feet, produce a filth, which excites a very troublesome itching: and though the Eastern people are extremely careful to preserve the body neat, it is more for refreshment than cleanliness that they wash their feet at the close of their journey.

According to D'Arvieux, the little yellow morocco boots, worn by the Arabs, are so close, as not to be penetrated by water; but none of the Eastern coverings for the foot can guard against the dust; consequently, this custom of washing the feet is not to be merely ascribed to their use of sandals.—

Harmer.

NO. 581.—DIVIDING THE SACRIFICE.

ii. 15. *Rightly dividing the word of truth.*

IT is possible that this is an allusion to what the Jewish High Priest or Levite did in dissecting the victim, and separating the parts in a proper manner; as some were to be laid on God's altar, and others to

be given to those who were to share in the sacrifice. Others think it refers to guiding a plough aright, in order to divide the clods in the most proper and effectual manner, and make strait furrows. But perhaps the metaphor may be taken from the distribution made by a steward, in delivering out to each person under his care, such things as his office and their necessities required.—*Doddridge.*

NO. 582.—MODE OF SEALING IN THE EAST.

ii. 19. *The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his : and, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.*

It appears, that the Easterns *seal* their doors with clay, and their writings with ink, instead of wax. D'Arvieux informs us, that the Arab seals have no figure engraven on them, but a simple inscription, formed with some art into a kind of cypher: and the modern inhabitants of Egypt make use of ink in their sealing, as well as the Arabs of the Desart. From these things we discover a closer connection between the vision of St. John—Rev. vii. 2, and that of Ezekiel —chap. ix. 2, than some commentators have apprehended. St. John saw an angel, with the *seal of the living God*, and therewith multitudes were sealed in their *foreheads*; but to understand what sort of mark was made there, we must have recourse to Ezekiel's *ink-horn*. Ezekiel, on the other hand, saw a person equipped with an *ink-horn*, who was to mark the servants of God in their foreheads: how this ink was to be applied is not expressed; but perhaps by refer-

ring to St. John's seal, we may have a complete view of the visions.

Olearius informs us, that the Persians thicken their ink with a sort of paste, or with sticks of Indian ink, which is the best paste of all; and favorable to their using it for sealing. It is probable, that the Jewish seals much resembled the Arabic—that they had nothing but an inscription on them: from hence it will appear, that it was extremely natural for St. Paul to make a seal and an inscription equivalent terms.—*The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal* (this inscription),—*The Lord knoweth them that are his.*—Harmer.

Mr. Burder considers it as an allusion to the custom of engraving upon stones, laid in the foundation of buildings, the name of the person by whom, and the purposes for which, the structure was raised; and adds, nothing can have a greater tendency to encourage the hope, and at the same time to engage the obedience of Christians, than this double inscription.

Where the indubitable seal,
That ascertains the kingdom mine ?
The pow'rful stamp I long to feel,
The signature of love divine !
O shed it in my heart abroad,
Fulness of love—of Heav'n—of God !

NO. 583.—OIL POURED ON THE HEADS OF VICTIMS.

iv. 6. *I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.*

This is an allusion to that universal custom of the world, of pouring wine or oil on the head of the victim immediately before it was slain. The Apostle's emphatical word signifies, wine is just now pouring

on my head, I am just going to be sacrificed to Pagan rage and superstition.—*Blackwall.*

According to Maimonides, it was done to give the offering a grateful relish: but Virgil supposes, that the oil was poured upon the beast that was sacrificed, to make it burn the better upon the altar. Frankincense was also put upon the victim to give it a sweet odour; and that the burning of its flesh might not be offensive.

TITUS.

NO. 584.—CUSTOM OF WASHING CHILDREN.

iii. 5. *By the washing of regeneration.*

As washing is an act whereby defilement is removed, and purification is effected, it is a very proper word to express that divine change which is produced by regeneration; and when connected with the ancient and universal practice of washing new-born infants, gives peculiar energy to the conversation of Christ with Nicodemus on the subject of the new birth; as also to the phrase used by the Apostle in this passage—*the washing of regeneration.*

Much attention was bestowed on the washing of infants. The Lacedemonians, says Plutarch in his life of Lycurgus, washed the new-born infant in wine; meaning thereby to strengthen the infant. Generally however they washed the children in water, warm perhaps in Greece, and cold in Egypt.—*Burder.*

NO. 585.—SELF-CONDEMNED CRIMINALS.

iii. 11. *He that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.*

In order to induce the criminal to confess his crimes, the Jews would say to him, " Give glory to God;" that is, confess the truth, and be your own Judge. They were of opinion, that criminals who confessed their crimes would partake in the happiness of a future state: and therefore they exhorted and pressed criminals not to draw down the hatred of God upon them, by obstinacy and stubbornness in concealing their crimes. St. Paul alludes to this custom—Rom. xiv. 22. *Happy is he that condemneth not himself in the thing which he alloweth:* that is, happy is he who, being convinced of the truth of a thing, is not weak enough to give testimony against himself, notwithstanding his conviction. Thus an heretic is *condemned of himself.*—*Lamy.*

PHILEMON.

NO. 586.—DEBTS AMONG THE ROMANS.

Ver. 19. *I Paul have written it with my own hand.* THESE words are to be explained by the Roman laws,—by which it was enacted, that if any man write that he hath undertaken a debt, it is a solemn obligation upon him. Whatsoever is written as if it were done, is reported to have been done. From hence it appears, that a man is bound as much by his own hand, or confession under it, as if any other testimonies or proofs were against him of any fact or debt.—*Hammond.*

NO. 587.—MANNER OF SWEARING AMONG THE JEWS.

vi. 16. *An oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.*

THE manner in which an oath was taken among the Jews, and to which the Apostle, writing to such, must be supposed to refer, was this,—“He that swore took the book of the law in his hand, and stood and swore by the name of God, or by his surnames: the Judges did not suffer any to swear but in the holy tongue: and thus he said, “Behold I swear by the God of Israel, by him whose name is Merciful and Gracious, that I do not owe this man any thing.” Herodotus says, that the Arabians, when they swore at making covenants, anointed the stones with blood.—

Gill.

NO. 588.—PURE WATER USED FOR ABLUTIONS.

x. 22. *And our bodies washed with pure water.*

Washings and purifications were frequently performed by the Jews, and the people of the East in general. The *water* used on these occasions was required to be very *pure*, and was therefore fetched from fountains and rivers. The water of lakes, or standing ponds was unfit for this purpose; so was also that of the purest stream, if it had been a considerable time separated from its source. The Jewish Essenes make use of the purer sorts of water for cleansing, as we are informed by Porphyry. To this practice the Apostle seems to allude in these words: and Ezekiel, in like manner, says, *then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean*--Ezek. xxxvi. 25. Sea water, on account of its saltiness, was preferred to any other. Hence Aristeas reports, concerning some of the Jews who lived near the sea, that every day

before matins they used to wash their hands in the sea.—*Potter.*

Having all our conversation spotless and holy ; which is far more acceptable to God than all the legal sprinklings and washings.—*Wesley.*

NO. 589.—DESCRIPTION OF ANCIENT TORTURE.

xii. 35. *And others were tortured.*

It does not seem to be determined whether the *torture* here spoken of was a mode of punishment distinct from others, or whether the term is not to be taken in a general sense for all kinds of capital punishment and violent death. Doddridge says, the original word signifies a peculiar sort of torture, which was called that of the tympanum, or drum,—when they were extended in the most violent manner, and then beaten with clubs; which must give exquisite pain, when all the parts were on such a stretch.—*Burder.*

Into a world of russians sent,
I walk on hostile ground ;
Wild human bears on slaughter bent,
And ravening wolves surround.

NO. 590.—BOXERS OFTEN BESMEARED WITH BLOOD.

xii. 4. *Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.*

It has been justly observed, by several commentators, that there are many agonistical terms in this context. In the phrase before us, there seems to be an allusion to the pugiles, or boxers, who fought erect, with their hands stretched out, and were often besmeared with blood. Saurin observes, in his illustration of this text, that sometimes men were killed by the blows of the cæstus.—*Burder.*

NO. 591.—THE SACRIFICE OF THANKSGIVING.

xiii. 15. *By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God.*

Among the Jews there was a sort of sacrifice called peace-offerings. These were not intended to make peace with God, but rather to preserve it. Burnt-offerings, sin offerings, and trespass-offerings, were all presented under the notion of some offence committed, and some guilt contracted, which they were the means of removing: but in the peace-offerings, the offerer was supposed to be at peace with God; and the offering was made rather in a way of thankful acknowledgment for mercies received, or as accompanying vows for obtaining further blessings, or in a way of free devotion, as a means of continuing and preserving peace with God. Thus the peace-offerings were distinguished into sacrifices of thanksgiving, votive offerings, and voluntary or free-will offerings.—Levit. vii. 11, 12. The sacrifice of thanksgiving is evidently referred to by the Apostle in these words.—

Jennings.

Eternal Wisdom! thee we praise;
Thee the creation sings:
With thy lov'd name rocks, hills, and seas,
And Heav'n's high palace rings.

JAMES.

NO. 592.—FEASTING UPON SACRIFICES.

v. 5. *Ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter.*

THE ordinary reader cannot see the relation between *a day of slaughter* and such high indulgence

and merriment. The ideas seem to be oddly put together: the pertinence of the passage may at least be doubted, and the grace of the metaphor is entirely lost. The text might be rendered,—“In a day or time of public feasting upon sacrifice.” It was the custom of all nations, in times of joy or happy success, first to offer some peculiar parts of the sacrifice, by way of burnt-offering, in gratitude and acknowledgment to their gods, and then to entertain and feast themselves upon all the rest, prepared and dressed for them, with great freedom and gaiety of heart; and upon these occasions the people often ran into great disorders and indecencies, to which the Apostle here alludes.—*Blackwall.*

I. PETER.

NO. 593.—SACRED TRANSACTIONS OF THE HEATHEN.

iv. 3. *The time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.*

MUCH of the distinguishing spirit of this passage is lost when it is understood as descriptive of the immoralities of common life, and not as giving an account of the polluted nature of what the Heathens called sacred transactions. The first word here used, *lasciviousness*, refers to lewd practices: the second, *lusts*, to irritation of voluptuous desire: the third, translated *excess of wine*, seems to mean buffoonery, through drinking too much wine: the other two words, *revellings* and *banquetings*, mean riotous and excessive eating and drinking.

An extract from Maillet will illustrate the buffoonery here alluded to. " You can hardly imagine how many traces of this ancient religion are still met with in Egypt, which have subsisted there for many ages. The modern Egyptians have the same taste for processions that was remarked in their ancestors. The only difference that I find in the matter is, that the ancients practised them in honor of their idols, and that the Egyptians of our days perform them in honor of their santons, or saints, who are not much better. There is no regularity in these ceremonies ; neither in their way of walking, nor in their vestments : every one dresses himself as he likes ; but those who are in the most grotesque and ridiculous habits are always most esteemed. Some dance ; others caper ; some shout. In a word, the great point is, who shall commit the most follies in those extravagant masquerades. The more they do, the more they believe themselves possessed by the spirit of their prophet."—*Harmer.*

NO. 594.—THE CHIEF SHEPHERD.

v. 4. *When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory.*

In ancient times, when flocks and herds of cattle were very numerous, the care of them required the attention of many *shepherds*; and that every thing might be conducted with regularity, it was necessary that one should preside over the rest. This we find was customary: hence we read, that Doeg was *the chiefest of the herdsmen that belonged to Saul* ;* and in some curious remarks on the sheep-walks of Spain,

* 1 Sam. xxi. 17.

published in the Gentleman's Magazine for May, 1764, we are informed, that in that country, where some Eastern customs are perpetuated from the Moors, they have to this day a chief shepherd over each flock of sheep. "Ten thousand compose a flock, which is divided into ten tribes. One man has the conduct of all. He must be the owner of four or five hundred sheep, strong, active, vigilant, intelligent in pasture, in the weather, and in the diseases of sheep. He has absolute dominion over fifty shepherds and fifty dogs, five of each to a tribe. He chooses them, he chastises them, or discharges them at will: he is the *chief shepherd of the flock.*"—*Burder.*

O that I at last may stand
With the sheep at thy right hand ;
Take the crown so freely given,
Enter in by thee to Heaven !

REVELATION.

NO. 595.—BANISHMENT AMONG THE ROMANS.

i. 9. *I John was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

THIS banishment succeeded in the room of that ancient punishment in which a man was obliged in his own defence to betake himself into banishment, when it became unlawful for any to accommodate him with lodging, diet, or any other necessary of life. But this banishing into islands was accounted the worst kind of exile; whereby the criminal forfeited his estate, and being bound, and put on board a ship,

was by public officers transported to some certain island, which none but the Emperor himself might assign, there to be confined in perpetual banishment. The place to which St. John was carried was Patmos, a little island in the Archipelago, now called Palmosa, mountainous, but moderately fruitful, especially in wheat and pulse, though defective in other commodities. The whole circumference of the island is about thirty miles. On one of the mountains stands a town of the same name, having on the top of it a monastery of Greek Monks ; and on the North side of the town, the inhabitants, by tradition, shew an house in which the Apocalypse was written, and not far off, the cave where it was revealed ; both places of great esteem and veneration with the Greeks and Latins.—*Wells.*

NO. 596.—AN OFFICER CALLED THE ANGEL OF THE CHURCH.

ii. 1. *The Angel of the church.*

Next to the chief Ruler of the synagogue was an officer, whose province it was to offer up public prayer to God for the whole congregation ; and who, on that account, was called *the Angel of the church*, because, as their messenger, he spake to God for them. Hence the Pastors of the seven churches of Asia are called by a name borrowed from the synagogue.—

Jennings.

NO. 597.—CROWNS VARIOUSLY BESTOWED.

ii. 10. *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*

A crown of life is promised to those who are *faithful unto death*, as an everlasting reward for their

fidelity. Dr. Gill considers it to be an allusion to the practice of some nations, who used to crown their dead.—*Burder.*

The reward is sure. He hath said it, that is able to do it: they shall have the reward from his own hand, and none of their enemies shall be able to wrest it out of his hand, or to pull it from their heads. A life worn out in his service, or laid down in his cause, shall be rewarded with another and a much better life, that shall be eternal.—*Henry.*

NO. 598.—SMALL STONES USED IN JUDGMENT.

ii.17. *To him that overcometh will I give a white stone.*

The *stone* here referred to is such an one as was used in popular judicature, or in elections, it being the custom to give the votes in either of these by such stones. These were either white or black; the white was a token of absolution or approbation, the black of condemnation or rejection. There were judges in the agonistical games, who awarded the prizes to the conqueror by the use of these stones; a white one, with the name of the person and the value of the prize, being given to such as were victorious. Ovid expressly mentions, that black and white stones were used to absolve or condemn persons at Argos.—

Burder.

The custom was, by white and black small stones,
To acquit the guiltless, and damn guilty ones.

NO. 599.—PRIESTS APPROVED OF CLOTHED IN WHITE.

iii. 5. *He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment.*

The allusion seems to be to the custom of the Jewish Sanhedrim in judging of Priests fit for service

Maimonides says, “they examine the Priests concerning their genealogies and blemishes: every Priest in whom was found any thing faulty in his genealogy was clothed in black, and veiled in black, and so went out of the court; but every one that was found perfect and right was clothed in white, and went in and ministered with his brethren the Priests.”—*Gill.*

NO. 600.—INSCRIPTIONS OF VICTORY AND PRIVILEGE.

iii. 12. *I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God.*

Great numbers of inscriptions are yet remaining, brought from the Grecian cities of Europe and Asia, and some from islands in the neighbourhood of Patmos, in which the victories of eminent persons are commemorated. Some of these were placed near the temples of their deities; others were in the temples; to signify that they were put under their particular direction: upon these were inscribed the names of the deities, of the conquerors, and of the cities to which they belonged, and the names of the Generals by whose conduct the victory was gained. Inscriptions also were sometimes placed upon pillars, to record the privileges granted to cities, and also the names of their benefactors.—*Burder.*

Appear with clouds on Sion's hill,
The word and myst'ry to fulfil,
Thy confessors t' approve:
Thy members on thy throne to place,
And stamp thy name on every face,
In glorious heay'nly love!

NO. 601.—THE RAINBOW, A TOKEN OF DIVINE FAVOR.

iv. 3. *A rainbow.*

The whole race of mankind being deeply interested

in this token of divine favor, it is not at all surprizing to find the signification of such an important emblem preserved among various nations. Homer, with remarkable conformity to scripture, speaks of the rainbow which Jove hath set in the cloud, as a token to men. Iris, or the rainbow, was worshipped not only by the Greeks and Romans, but also by the Peruvians in South America, when the Spaniards first visited them.—*Burder.*

The rainbow was the seal and token of the covenant of providence which God made with Noah, and his posterity with him; and is a fit emblem of that covenant, ordered in all things and sure: the most prevailing color was a pleasant green, to show the reviving and refreshing nature of the new covenant.—*Henry.*

NO. 602.—MANNER OF SITTING IN THE JEWISH CONSISTORY.

iv. 4. *And round about the throne were four and twenty seats; and upon the seats I saw four and twenty Elders sitting.*

The situation of the Elders is agreeable to the ancient manner of sitting in council or consistory among the Jews. There is a representation of this Dan. vii. 9.—*I beheld till the seats, or thrones, were pitched (not thrown down, as in our translation), and the Ancient of Days did sit in the midst of the other thrones, as the father or head of the consistory, and the judgment was set,—ver. 10,—that is, the whole Sanhedrim; the rest of the Elders were seated on those thrones that were round about, and the books were opened, preparatory to the judicature.—*

Hammond.

NO. 603.—DESCRIPTION OF THE JEWISH VIALS.

v. 8. *Golden vials full of odours.*

Vials were of common use in the temple service: they were not like those small bottles which we now call by that name; but were like cups on a plate, in allusion to the censers of gold, in which the Priests offered incense in the temple. These censers were a sort of cups, which, because of the heat of the fire burning the incense, were often put upon a plate or saucer. The common custom of drinking tea and other hot liquors out of a cup and saucer, will shew the form of these censers.—*Lowman.*

NO. 604.—PALMS CARRIED BY CONQUERORS.

vii. 9. *And palms in their hands.*

Conquerors used to carry palm-tree branches in their hands. Those who conquered in the Grecian combats, not only had crowns of palm-tree given them, but carried branches of it in their hands. The Romans did the same in their triumphs; and they sometimes wore a garment with the figures of palm-trees interwoven in it.—*Gill.*

Fight on, ye conq'ring souls, fight on ;
 And when the conquest you have won,
 Then palms of vict'ry you shall bear,
 And in his kingdom have a share,
 And crowns of glory ever wear,
 In endless day.

NO. 605.—THE WORSHIP OF THE DEVIL IN THE EAST.

ix. 20. *That they should not worship devils.*

Mr. Ives, in his travels through Persia, speaking of the Sanjacks,* says, “these people once professed

* A nation inhabiting the country about Mosul, the ancient Nineveh.

Christisnity,—then Mahomedanism,—and last of all, Devilism. They say it is true that the Devil has, at present, a quarrel with God ; but the time will come, when the pride of his heart being subdued, he will make his submission to the Almighty ; and as the Deity cannot be implacable, the Devil will receive a full pardon for all his transgressions ; and both he and all those who paid him attention during his disgrace, will be admitted into the blessed mansions. This is the foundation of their hope ; and this chance for Heaven they esteem to be a better one than that of trusting to their own merits, or the merits of the leader of any other religion whatsoever. The person of the Devil they look on as sacred ; and when they affirm any thing solemnly, they do it by his name. All disrespectful expressions of him they would punish with death, did not the Turkish power prevent them. When they speak of him it is with the greatest respect ; and they always put before his name a certain title, corresponding to that of Highness or Lord.

Abbe de Guyon says, that the Benjans, in the East Indies, fill their temples, or pagodas, with the statues of the Devil, designed in all the horrid extravagance of the Indian taste. The King of Calicut has a pagoda filled with the most frightful figures of the Devil, which receives no other light than what proceeds from the gleam of a multitude of lamps. In the midst of this kind of cavern is a copper throne, whereon a devil, formed of the same matter, is seated, with a tiara of several rows upon his head, three large horns, and four others, which spring out of his forehead. He has a large gaping mouth, out of which come four teeth like the tusks of a boar. His

chin is furnished with a long and hideous beard. He has a crooked nose, large squinting eyes, a face frightfully inflamed, fingers crooked like talons, and paws rather than feet. His breasts hang down upon his belly, where his hands are laid in a negligent posture: from his belly arises another head, uglier if possible than the first, with two horns, and a tongue hanging out, prodigiously large, and behind him a tail like a cow's tail. On his tongue and in his hand there are two figures, almost round, which the Indians say are souls which he is preparing to devour.

Burder.

NO. 606.—POISON INFUSED IN WINE.

xiv. 10. *The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture, into the cup of his indignation.*

The wine of the wrath of God, and the cup of his indignation, are expressions taken from the language of the Prophets. It was not only customary to treat friends with a cup of wine as a mark of affection, but to execute the sentence of death on offenders by making them drink a cup of wine, in which some strong poison had been infused. Such was the execution of Socrates by a cup of poison. Grotius seems to give a just account of the expression, *without mixture*; that it intimates, that the poisonous ingredients were infused in pure unmixed wine, to take a stronger tincture, and become a more deadly poison.

Lowman.

In all the scriptures there is not another such terrible threatening as this.—*The wrath of God—without any mixture of mercy!* *The smoke of their*

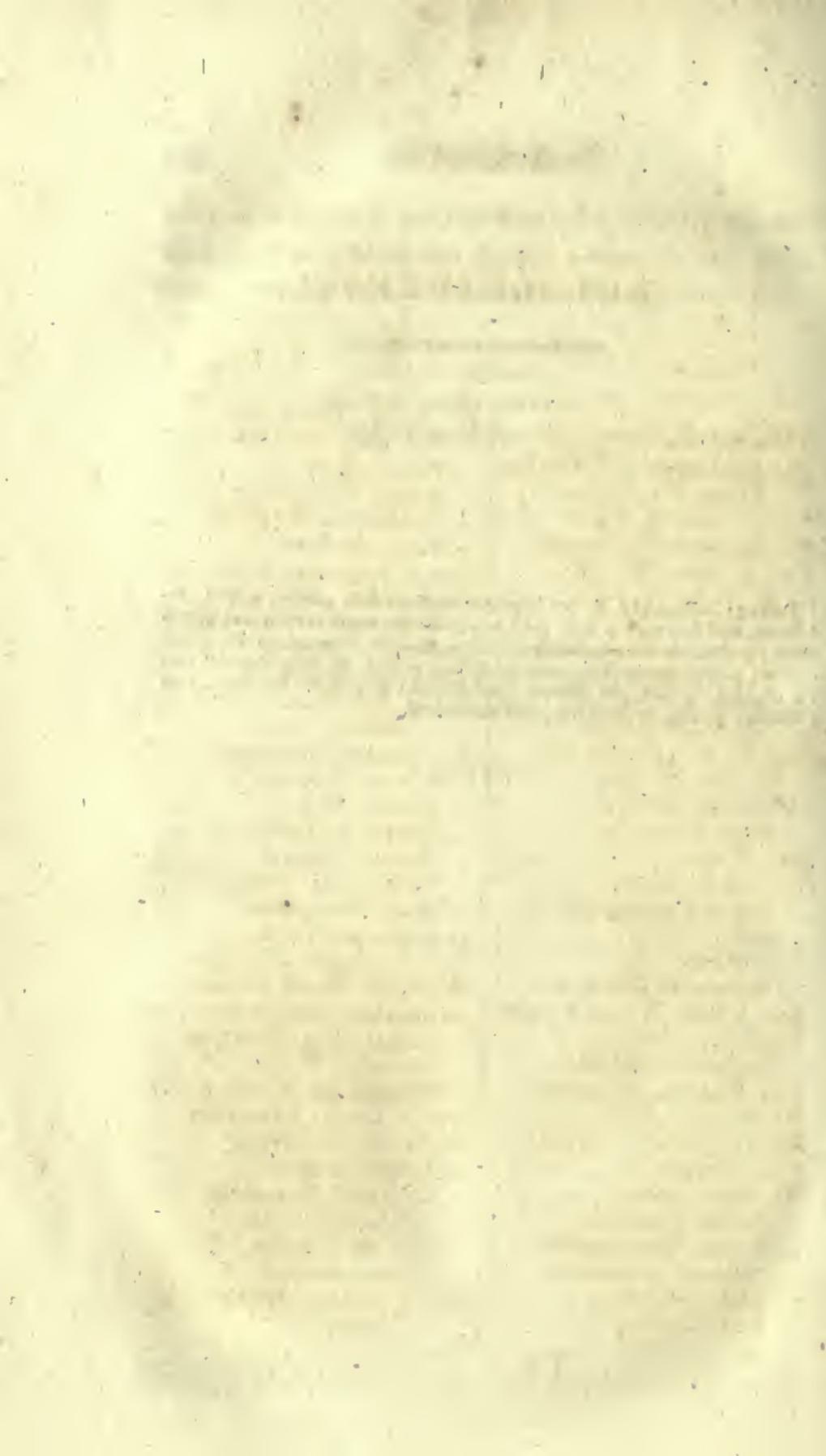
torment ascendeth up for ever and ever! Reader,
God grant that thou and I may never try the strict
literal eternity of this torment!—*Wesley.*

Tempests of angry fire shall roll,
To blast the rebel-worm,
And beat upon his naked soul
In one eternal storm.

WATTS.

FINIS.

ERRATA.—Page 172, *for* put in proper, *read* put it in proper ; p. 274, *for* Jentyra, *read* Tentyra ; p. 303, *for* it was not in' the night, *real* it was in the night ; p. 306, *for* the comparing crocodiles, *read* the comparing them to crocodiles ; p. 336, *for* the Kiug, *read* the thing ; p. 341, *for* they alighted, *read* she alighted ; p. 374, *for* Bathus, *read* Battus ; p. 428, *for* Pharisees, *read* Pharisee ; p. 434, *for* carot-tree, *read* carob-tree.



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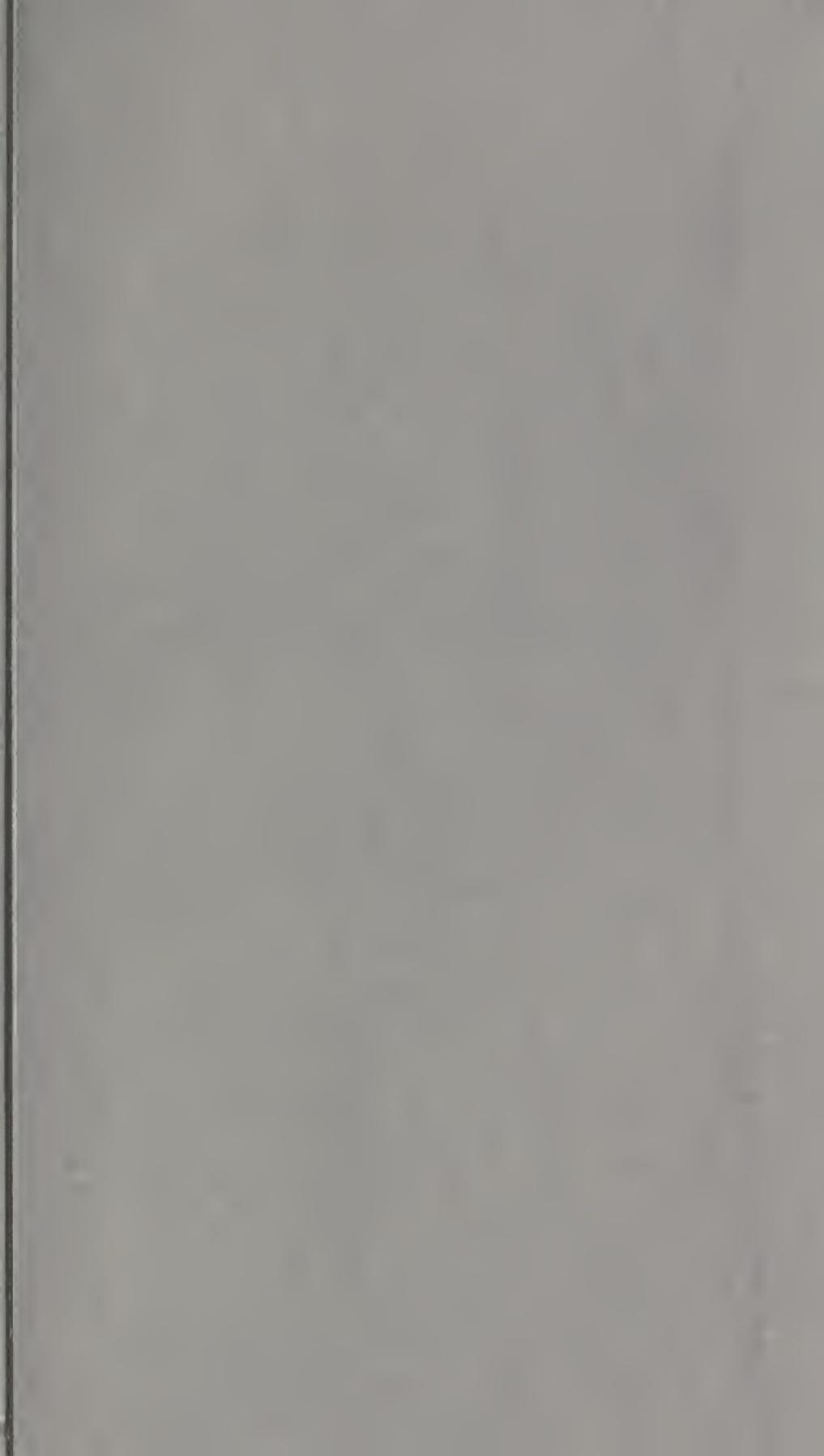
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